

2004

## A Redevelopment Plan for The Monastery in Cumberland, Rhode Island

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# **A Redevelopment Plan for The Monastery**

in Cumberland, Rhode Island



By  
**Craig S. Pereira**

A Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
**Master of Community Planning**

**University of Rhode Island**

2004

**Master of Community Planning  
Research project  
of  
Craig S. Pereira**

**Approved:  
Major Professor**

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**Farhad Atash**

**Acknowledged:  
Director**

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**Farhad Atash**

## **Abstract**

This research project proposes a plan for the redevelopment of the Monastery in Cumberland, Rhode Island. The study will detail the history and cultural value of the site to the people of Cumberland, Rhode Island. The environmental setting will be defined and evaluated to determine environmental constraints to development through Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping and a site survey of existing conditions. The site will also be evaluated through the perspective of land use regulations, political issues, and trends in programs for the preservation/ protection of open space.

A major consideration in the development of this plan was the Town of Cumberland's Comprehensive Plan, which was revised in 2003. Specific recommendations identified in the Comprehensive Plan under the Natural Resources Element, Public Services and Facilities Element, Cultural resources Element, and Open Space/ Recreation Element have also been identified for further analysis in this study.

The work of the Cumberland Land Trust, the Rhode Island State Planning Program – Greenways Council, and other Federal, State, and Local Programs will be explored to provide open space linkages to the study area.

A concept for the redevelopment of the study area into a 'Community Resource Complex' will be presented. The plan includes: the relocation of the historic Town Hall facility; the creation of a preschool educational facility; the creation of a Town-wide information center; enhanced and expanded passive and active recreation areas; open space acquisitions and linkages; a maintenance and stewardship plan for both public and privately-owned open space; and the overall goal of creating a 'sense of place' for Cumberland's residents.

The final chapter of the study will discuss implementation of the redevelopment plan. The cost of open space acquisition will be estimated, and the availability of funding sources will be evaluated. Collaboration with Local, State, and Federal Programs will be explored in expanding Cumberland's open space acquisition. Fiscal impacts to the Town will also be estimated, as well as the Town's role in the implementation process.

## **Acknowledgements**

Many thanks to Dr. Farhad Atash. I consider Dr. Atash an outstanding educator with a genuine interest in his students. As a mentor and advisor, he has always been generous with his time during the past several years, as well as providing guidance and support.

This project is dedicated to Kristin L. Rutan. Her patience, love and support have enabled me to achieve my personal goals.

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## **Chapter One**

### **The Monastery...Untapped Potential**

#### **Introduction**

As growth in Cumberland exceeds projections, open space lands are diminishing, and along with this – it's rural character. Adequate facilities for pre-school and elementary-aged children are needed. The existing Town Hall no longer functions in meeting the needs of the residents of Cumberland. Recreational spaces, both passive and active are needed – especially in the southern region of Town. Cultural and Town-sponsored activities/ events occur haphazardly throughout the community. Maintenance provisions of public open spaces and stewardship of privately owned spaces are also necessary to sustain these resources. The Town of Cumberland lacks a defined 'Town Center' where residents and tourists can associate certain services and/ or activities available to them.

The Monastery, a 436.6-acre parcel of open space recently acquired by the Town is an underutilized resource, centrally located within the Town. Currently, the Monastery is home to the Town's Public Library, Senior Center, Rhode Island Collaborative – a private special needs educational facility, a playground, outdoor theater, and various cultural and natural resource areas.

This is a critical time for this piece of property, with a window of opportunity to carefully plan for its future. This research project proposes a redevelopment plan for the Monastery that incorporates planning and design principles that are appropriate for the unique characteristics of the site. The plan also respects the history of the property by

keeping much of it as a public space, and proposing restoration projects to bring it back to its former glory.

### **Essential Elements of a Redevelopment Plan**

In order for a redevelopment plan of the Monastery to work, it must contain the following elements: access and open space; public services and facilities; cultural and activity support; active and passive recreation; public involvement and awareness; and planning and design principles.

#### ***Access and Open Space***

The Monastery has been accessible to the general public since the 1930's. Generations of Cumberland residents, as well as tourists have visited the Monastery grounds, not just for religious purposes as originally intended, but also to use its hiking trail, playground, Public Library, Senior Center, and Veteran's memorials. Due in part to its historical value, but also because of its potential as a Community Resource Complex and central location, the Monastery should be redeveloped in a way that maximizes public access and open space.

#### ***Public Services and Facilities***

The Monastery is currently home to public infrastructure such as the Public Library and Senior Center. Several Veterans' memorials are also located on the site. The Rhode Island Collaborative School is located at the southern end of the site. Vacant space within existing structures remains underutilized and could serve as potential sites of

additional public infrastructure, such as the relocation of Town Hall and preschool educational facilities.

### *Cultural and Activity Support*

As noted earlier, cultural and Town-sponsored activities/ events occur haphazardly throughout the community. Cumberland lacks a defined 'Town Center'. Nine Men's Misery – a historic landmark is hidden within the wooded area of the Monastery. Events such as "The Haunted Monastery" which takes place in the fall, as well as Cumberland Company's "Renaissance Fair" continue to bring residents and tourists into the site. In keeping with several annual events and the heritage of the site, the Monastery should be redeveloped as a Community Resource Complex.

### *Active and Passive Recreation*

Picnic areas, a walking/-jogging trail, an outdoor stage, and a playground are underutilized by residents. Expansive fields and open grass could become future sites of athletic fields and enhanced recreation areas. The Cumberland Land Trust has been working to acquire lands since 1989 to establish the Cumberland Greenway Network. A redevelopment plan can preserve open space within the site, and aid in acquiring adjacent properties to facilitate the continued expansion of the Cumberland Greenway Network.

### *Public Involvement/ Awareness*

Public participation is crucial to the success of a redevelopment plan for the Monastery. Support from various neighborhood organizations and sponsorship by Town

groups and associations can work in conjunction with one another in creating a 'sense of place' for the Town.

### *Planning and Design Principles*

Through proper site planning and design, a Community Resource Complex can be an asset to the residents of Cumberland. A redevelopment plan of the Monastery should incorporate site planning and design principles so that it will fit harmoniously with the unique natural features of the site and encourage/ support activities that promote a defined 'Town Center'.

### **A Mixed-Use Community Resource Complex**

Considering these essential elements, the best use for this property is actually a mix of uses. The Monastery should be redeveloped as a Community Resource Complex. Relocating the Town Hall to the vacant library site, rehabilitating the existing utility building to create a preschool educational facility, creating an Town-wide information center at the main gate house, enhancing/ expanding natural areas such as the walking/ jogging trail, establishing athletic ball fields, and creating a community awareness pamphlet for both residents and tourists will give Cumberland a defined 'Town Center' as well as a 'sense of place'.

Cumberland's Comprehensive Plan identifies a variety of needs the Town currently lacks. This research project proposes to address many of these needs while preserving its unique character and charm. Proposed is a redevelopment plan for the Monastery that incorporates New Urbanist planning and design principles, enhancing/ creating public

infrastructure, enhancing/ creating public open space and recreational areas, and sensitivity to the conservation of land and existing environmental features.

### **Objectives and Methods of the Study**

This research project proposes a plan for the redevelopment of the Monastery. The following five sections will establish the groundwork and then describe the plan in detail as follows:

#### ***The Monastery's History and Cultural Value***

The study first discusses the historical importance and evolution of the site, as well as its cultural value to the residents of Cumberland, Rhode Island.

#### ***Environmental Setting and Constraints***

In order to determine the Monastery's redevelopment potential, the study identifies and then evaluates the environmental setting of the study area. Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping is used to evaluate environmental constraints to determine the parts of the study area precluded from development and those where development is appropriate. A site survey also evaluates existing conditions of the study area.

#### ***Regulatory and Political Setting***

The study area is evaluated through the perspective of Federal, State, and Local land use regulations. Political concerns involved with redevelopment of the site are also considered.

### *A Redevelopment Plan for the Monastery*

A concept for the redevelopment of the study area into a Community Resource Complex is presented. The redevelopment plan addresses many issues identified in the Town's Comprehensive Plan and incorporates New Urbanist planning and design principles. The plan includes: the relocation of Town Hall to the vacant library site; the creation of a preschool educational facility; enhanced and expanded passive and active recreation areas; open space acquisitions and linkages; a maintenance and stewardship plan for both public and privately-owned open space; and the overall goal of creating a 'sense of place' for Cumberland's residents. The redevelopment plan attempts to retain much of the historical character of the Monastery, while addressing modern-day needs.

### *Implementation*

The final chapter of the research project discusses implementation of the redevelopment plan. It estimates the impact of this plan, both to the Town and its residents. Development costs include those for land acquisition and land improvement. The fiscal impact includes public services and amenities for its residents. Costs for open space acquisition is estimated based on recent appraisals, with funding resources evaluated. Finally, the Town's role in implementation is explored.

### **Untapped Potential...A New Monastery**

Eventually, this scenic parcel of land will be transformed. If residents and officials act now, they can collectively guide how this land is transformed. By insisting on a higher



level of land use planning, Cumberland can address the needs of many while preserving the natural environment for generations to come.

## **Chapter Two**

### **The Monastery's History and Cultural Value**

#### **Introduction**

The history of the Monastery began when Dom John Murphy purchased 300 acres of land in the Township of Cumberland in August 1900 from the Right Reverend Matthew Harkins – Bishop of Providence. Originally known as The Abbey of Petit Clairvaux, the Monastery was sold to the Trappists of Timaduc, who, threatened with expulsion by the French Government resumed monastic life at The Abbey of Our Lady of the Valley. Named for its proximity to the Blackstone Valley, it became one of the first Trappists Monasteries in the United States in 1902. Dom John Mary was in charge until his death in 1913, when Dom John O'Connor succeeded him. The monks themselves constructed a monastic church and large Porter's Lodge of Pigeon Gray granite quarried on the premises. Their numbers continued to rise steadily. In 1943 Dom Edmund Futterer was appointed Superior, as numbers rose spectacularly to 137 during the postwar years.

In 1950, on the Feast of St. Benedict – March 21, the Abbey was ravaged by fire. The original front wing was completely destroyed, the Abbatial Church was demolished and remaining buildings necessitated extensive repairs. No life was lost, but the community left homeless, abandoned the site and relocated in Spencer, MA where they still exist today.

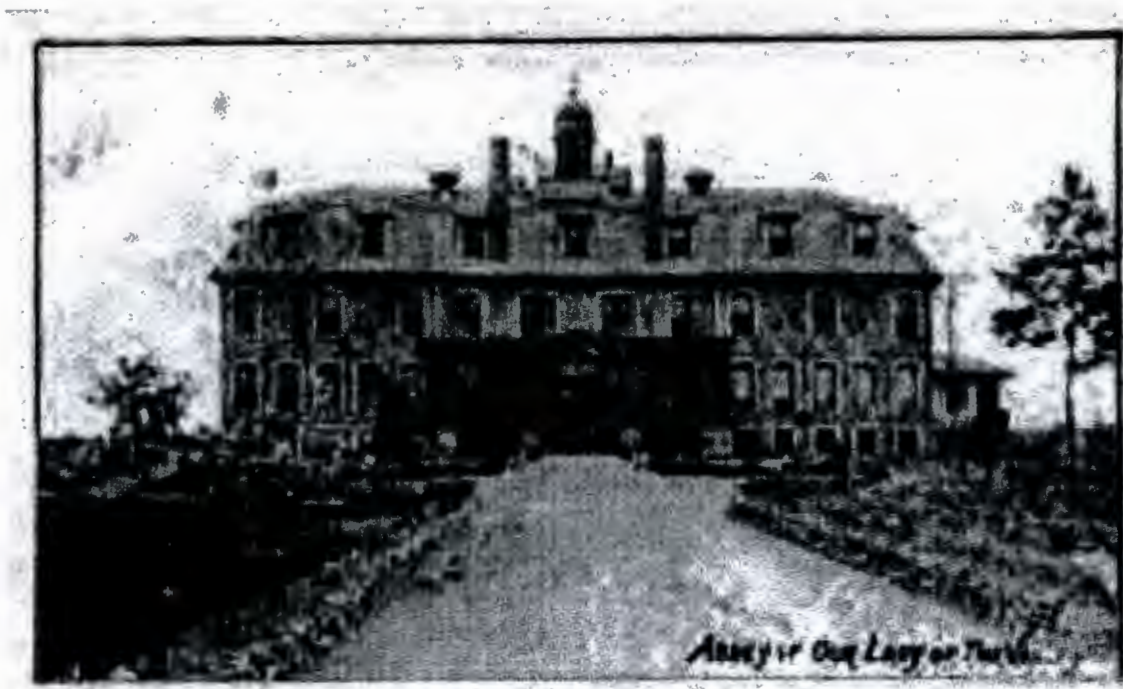


Figure 2.0 Abbey of the Lady of the Valley



Figure 3.0 Aerial Photograph of the Monastery



Figure 4.0 Cistercian Monks Working in the Fields



Figure 5.0 Cistercian Monks Returning from the Fields

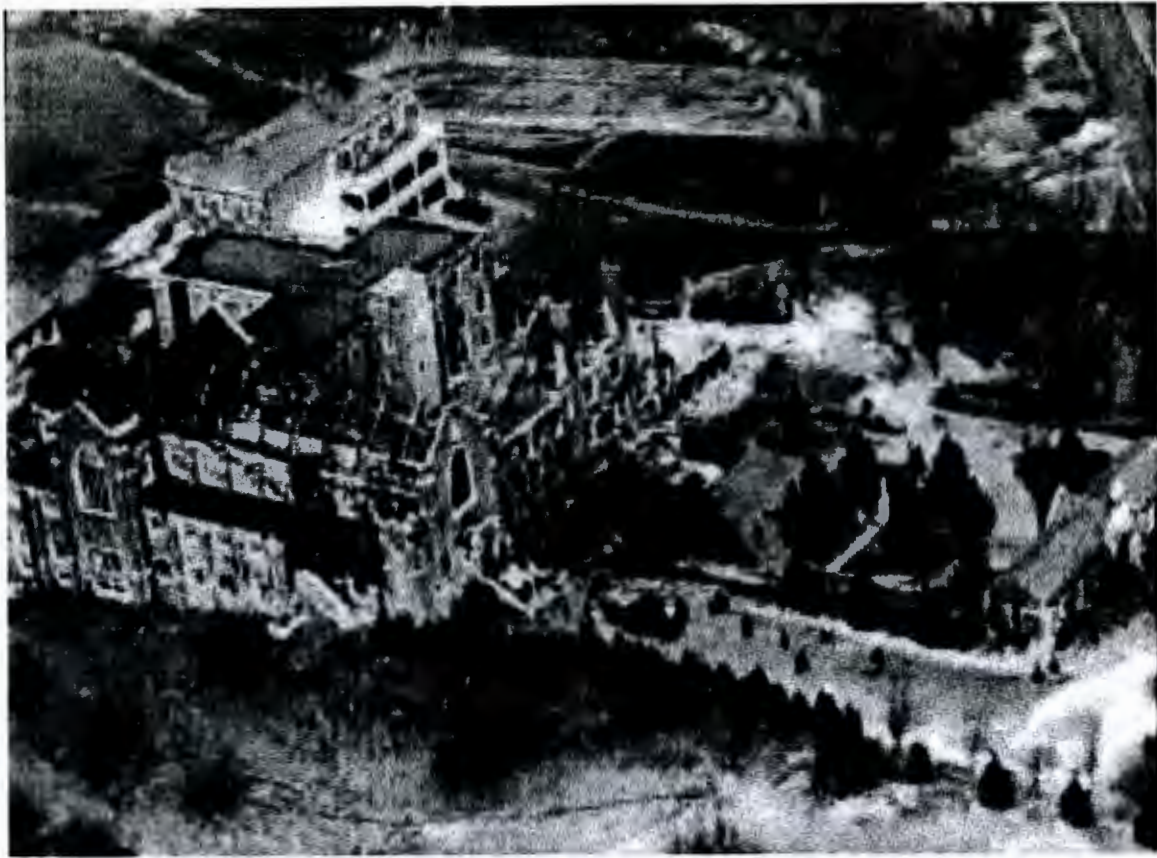




Figure 6.0 Church, Erected in 1928



Figure 7.0 March 21, 1950 Fire



**Figure 8.0 Aerial Photograph of Monastery After Fire, 1950**

### **Recreational Uses**

Man-made trails have existed throughout the site for many years. Several foot and motorbike trails still exist today. During the 1970's and early 1980's, camping by Boy Scout troops within the Town occurred on a regular basis. The expansive open fields surrounded by lush woodland served as a perfect setting for weekend jamborees. Eventually, the Town constructed a playground and more recently, a skating pond for winter recreation.

## **Public Infrastructure and Services**

The Cumberland Recreation Department utilized the Monastery grounds for many years throughout the 1970's and 1980's as its Summer Camp for Town residents. The camp ran from 8 AM to 4 PM Monday through Friday, and offered families within the Town an option for affordable childcare during the summer school vacation. The Public Library was established in a vacant portion of the Monastery, being utilized by many residents, many of whom had never been inside the Monastery's gates. A maintenance garage in the back of the study area was utilized by the Cumberland Police Department to house their horses for several years. Eventually, the Cumberland Senior Center occupied vacant portions of the former Monastery and has proved to be a great location for many elderly residents to visit.

## **Cultural Uses**

At the entrance of the Monastery are two Veteran's Memorials that are utilized by the Cumberland Post 14 Veteran's Council. They conduct several ceremonies annually and maintain the site as well. Cumberland Company – a local theater group began holding their 'Renaissance Fairs' on the grounds of the Monastery. The natural setting and size of the site provided many options for the group to hold simultaneous events to large numbers of guests for many weekends throughout the Fall. For several years, another for-profit group ran a 'Haunted Monastery' at the site. The historical buildings and grounds served as a great backdrop for the haunted maze. This same group funded the construction of an outdoor theater that exists today, just off the playground area.

## **The Future**

The Monastery has indeed had a colorful past. Any individual who has lived in Cumberland for more than a few years has experienced the Monastery. This colorful past is important and should not be forgotten when redeveloped, in fact, it should be redeveloped in a way that respects its history.



## **Chapter Three**

### **Environmental Setting and Constraints**

#### **Introduction**

The Monastery is not just a former Cistercian Monastery. It is also an abundant geographic feature. This chapter will define the study area and assess its important environmental features and constraints to development.

#### **The Study Area**

The study area is centrally located in Cumberland, Rhode Island. It is a 436.6-acre parcel of land that is predominantly forested. Approximately 400 acres of the site are undeveloped.

The Town of Cumberland owns the property formerly occupied by the Cistercian Monks. It is listed in the Town of Cumberland's Tax Assessor's Records as Plat 18, Lot #1.

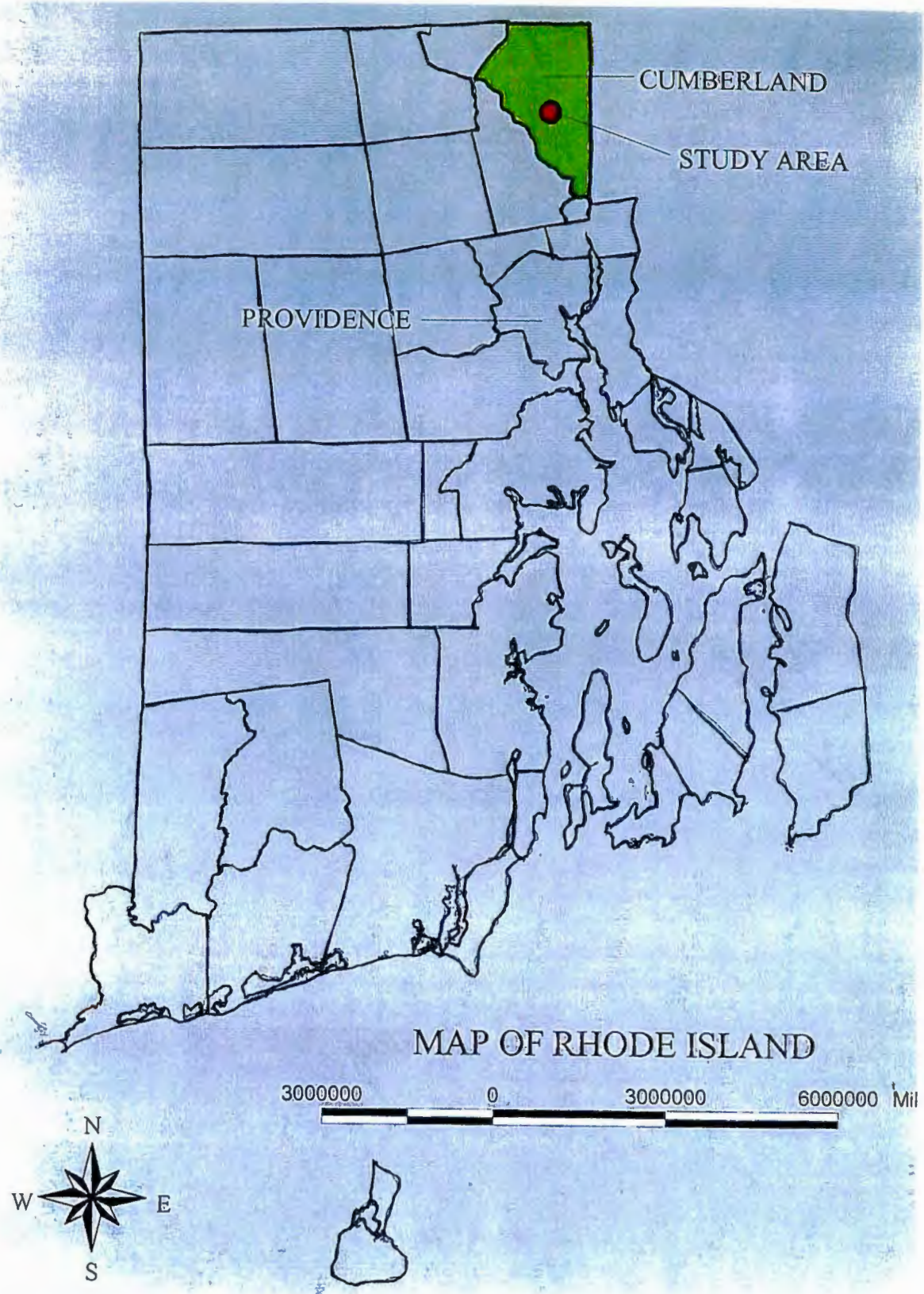
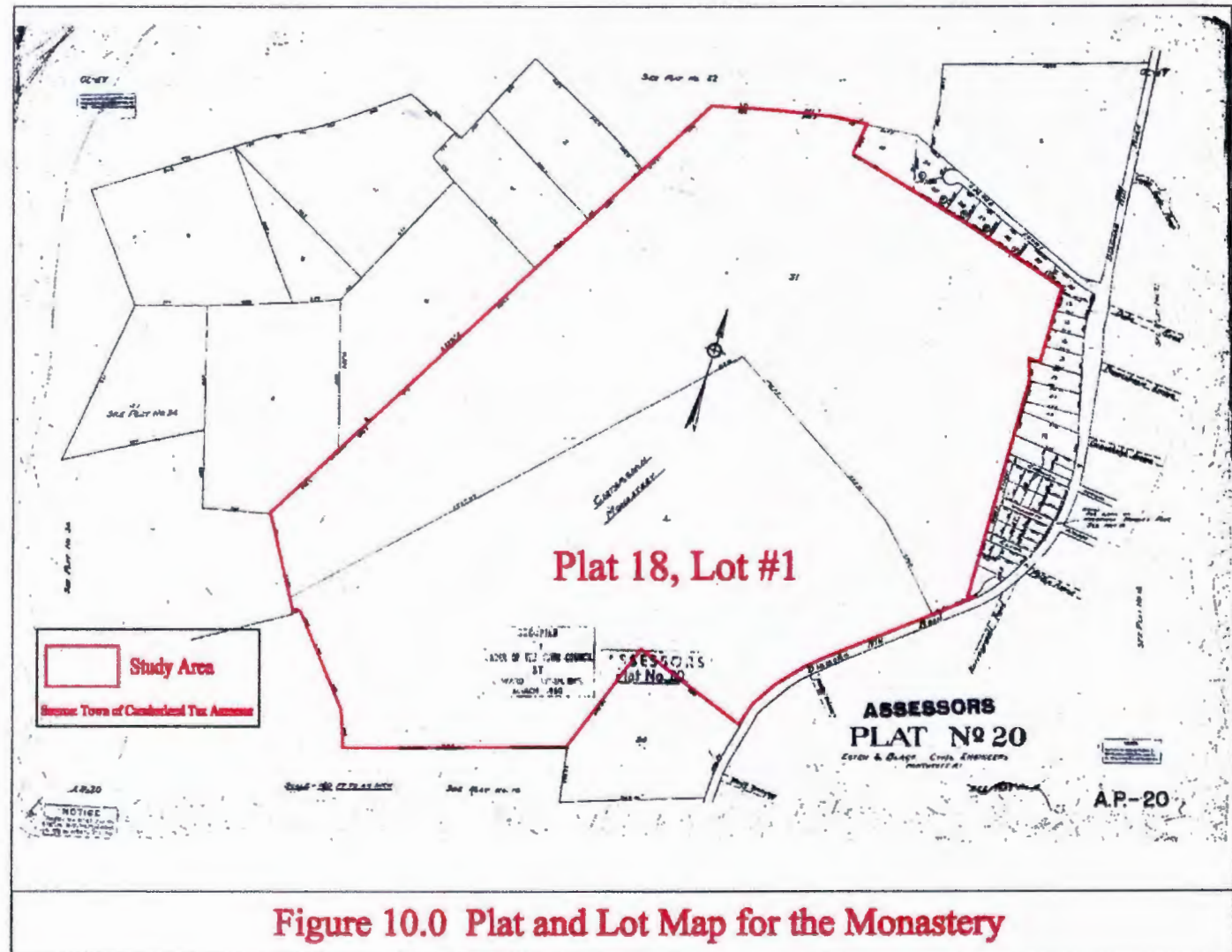


Figure 9.0 The Monastery Study Area





## **Topography**

The study area consists of a wide variety of hills, plains, wetland, forest, and fields. The Surficial Geography in Cumberland includes till, bedrock, outwash, and minerals. Most of the study area is composed of till, a material which was deposited with little or no sorting and compacted to form dense deposits not suited to groundwater storage. Bedrock outcrops are scattered throughout the site. Much of the bedrock is calcareous based, which reduces acidity of overlying soils. This unique chemical makeup supports plant communities found that are exclusively within this region. The majority of the study area is void on any steep slopes prevalent in the north and east portions of the Town.

## **Soils**

The study area contains many different types of soils, according to the Rhode Island Soil Survey. Portions of the study area contain prime agricultural soils such as Agawam, Bridgehampton, Canton/ Charlton, and Paxton. In addition, portions of the study area contain hydric soils with severe limitations to development such as Adrian Muck, Carlisle, Ridgebury, and Walpole.



**Figure 11.0 The Monastery Topography**

## **Wetlands**

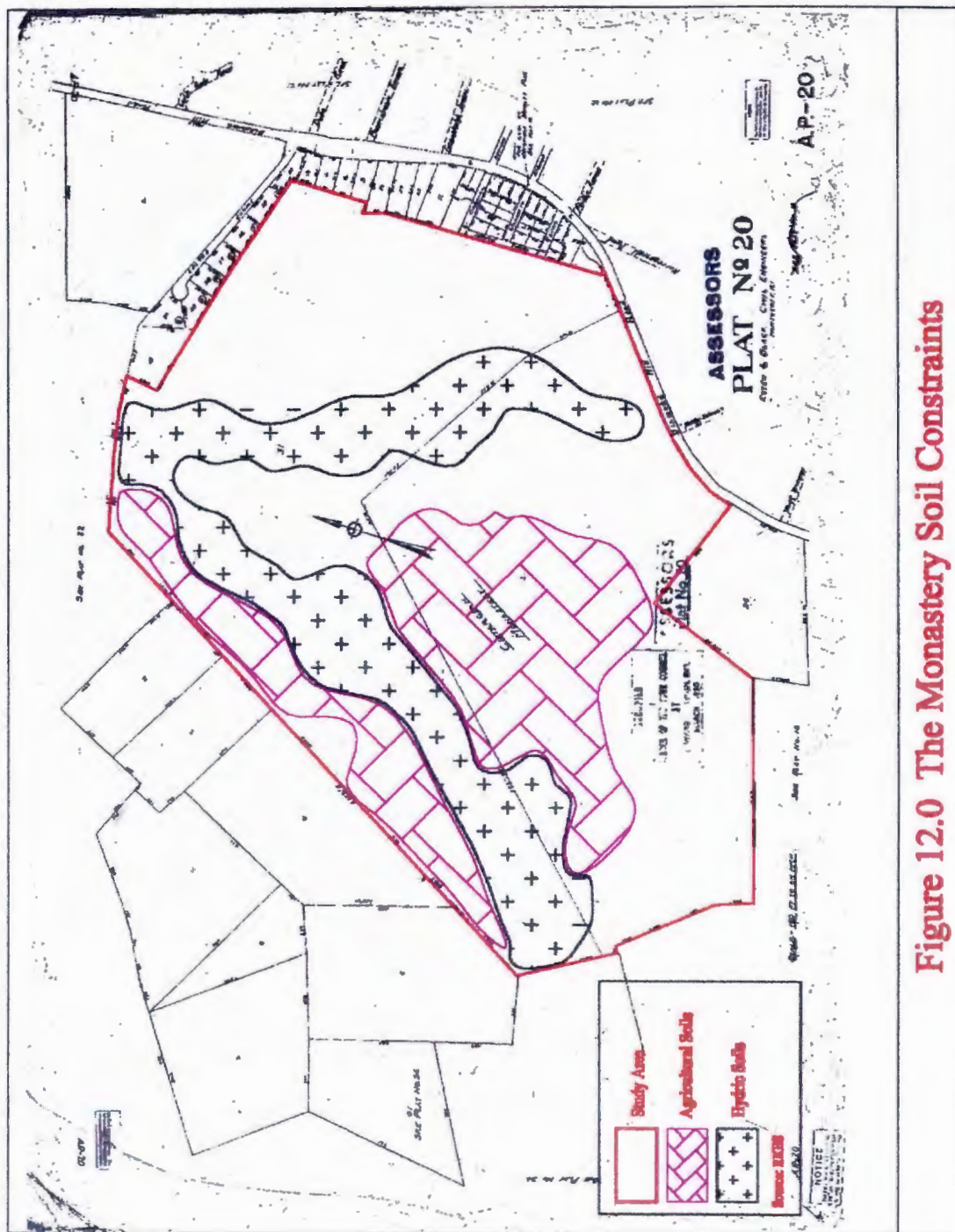
Wetlands in the study area are found primarily in the central portion, just outside the developed areas and on the edge of the woodland area. According to RIGIS, wetlands consist of deciduous forested wetland interspersed with areas of Shrub Swamp and several areas of open water.

## **Floodplain**

The study area has a small area of floodplain. Flood-prone areas include low-lying portions of the site within the 100-year Floodplain.

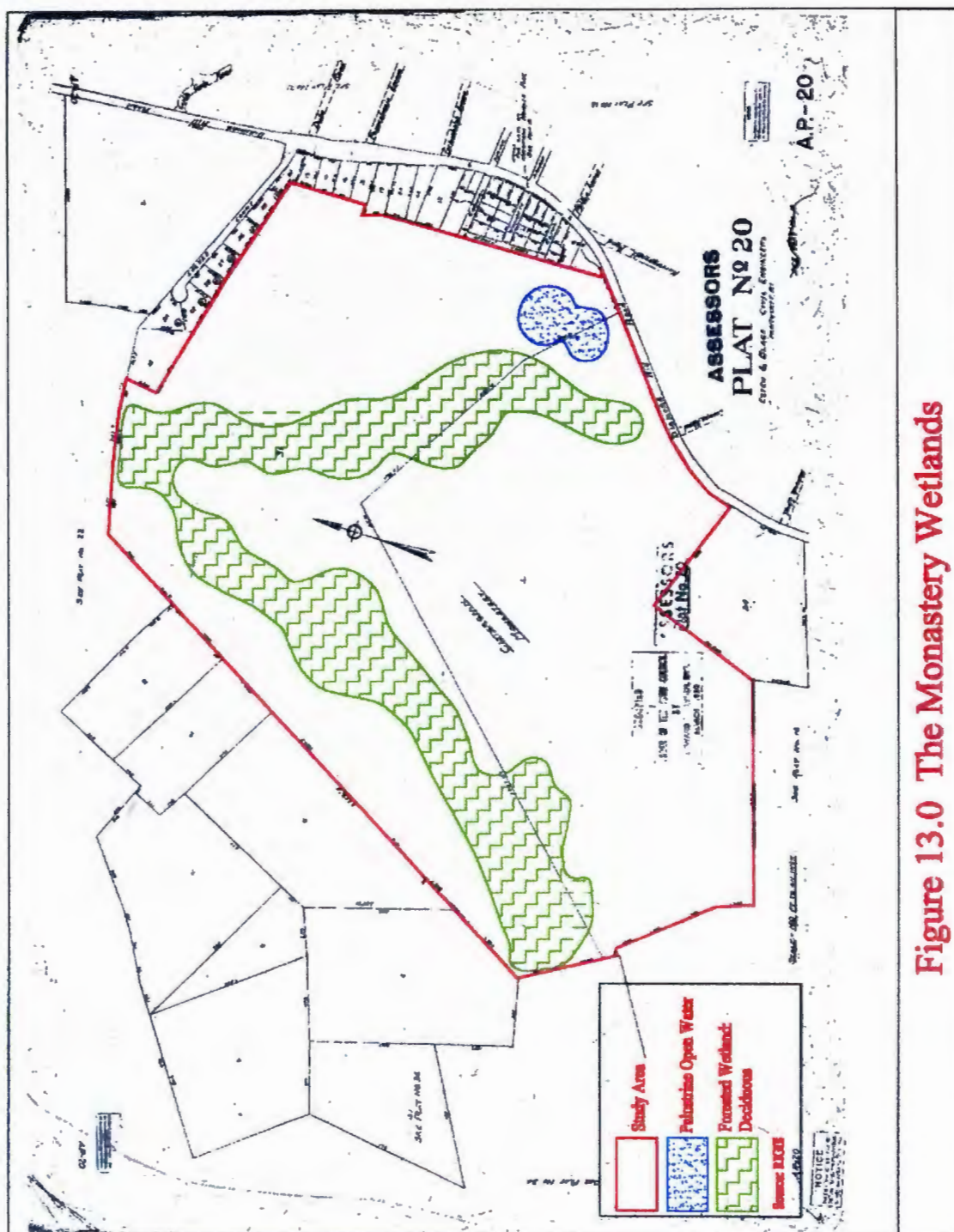
## **Combined Environmental Constraints**

By overlapping maps of environmental features, an assessment of the combined environmental constraints is possible. Figure 14.0 shows the resulting constraints.

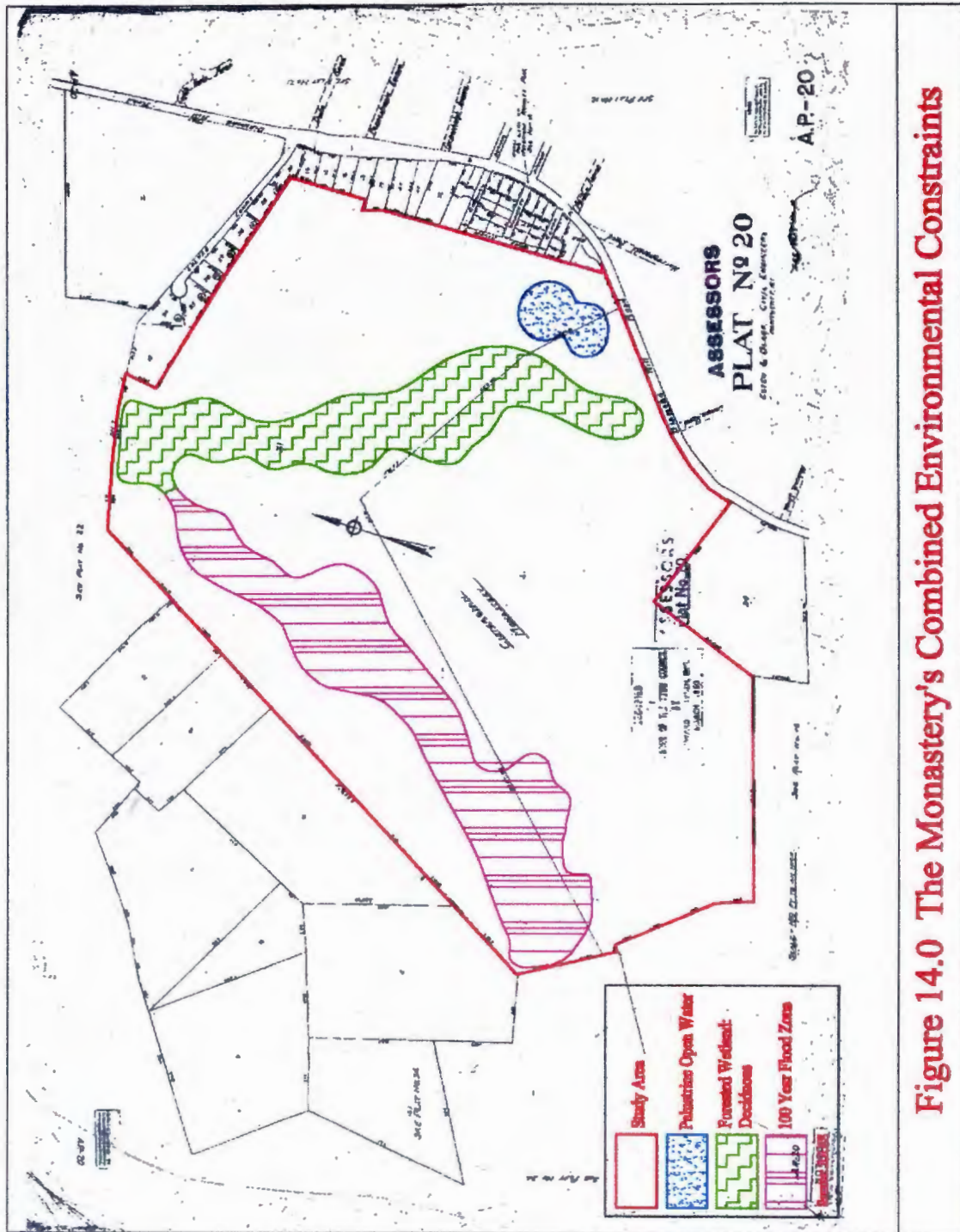


**Figure 12.0 The Monastery Soil Constraints**







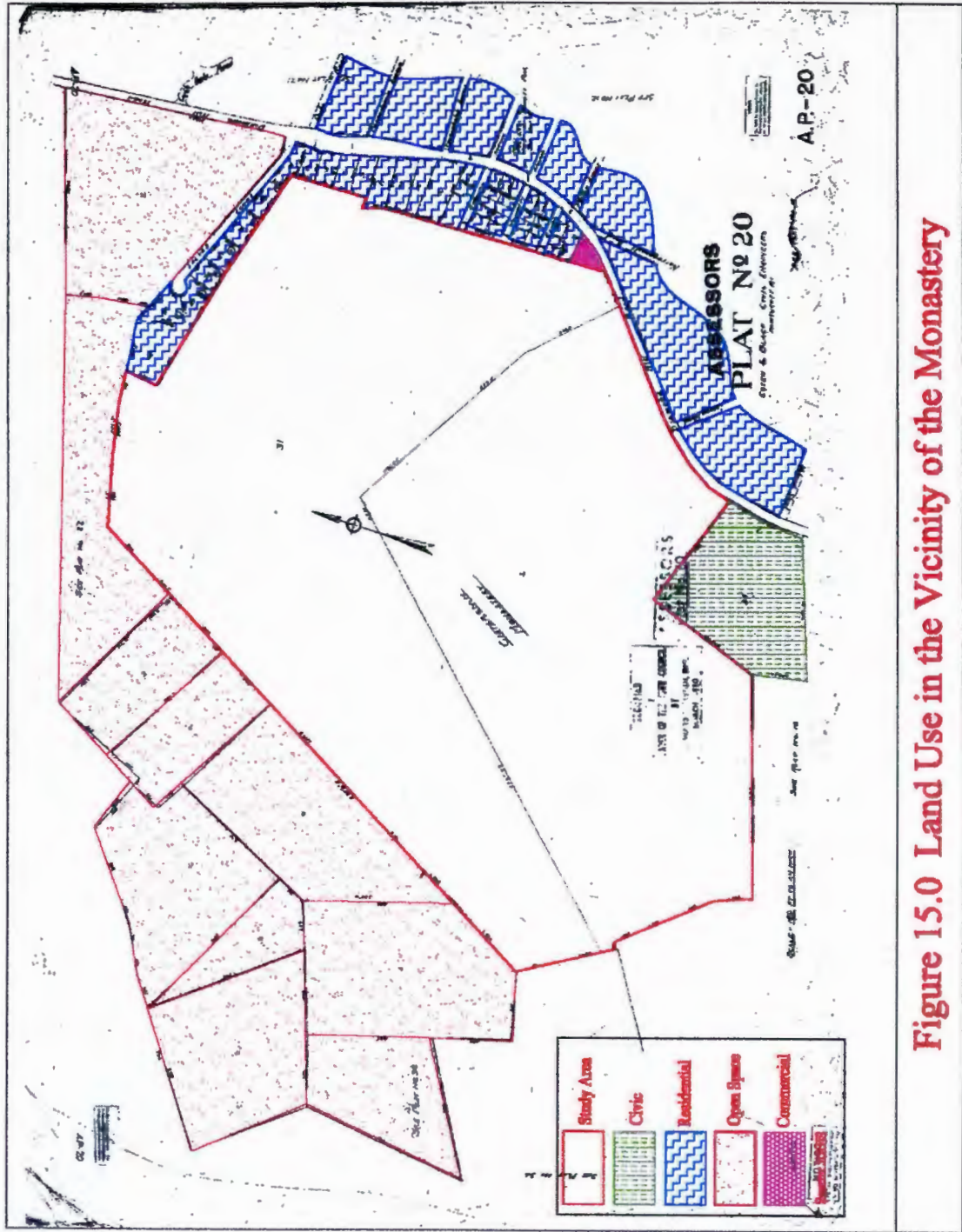


**Figure 14.0 The Monastery's Combined Environmental Constraints**

## **Land Use and Infrastructure**

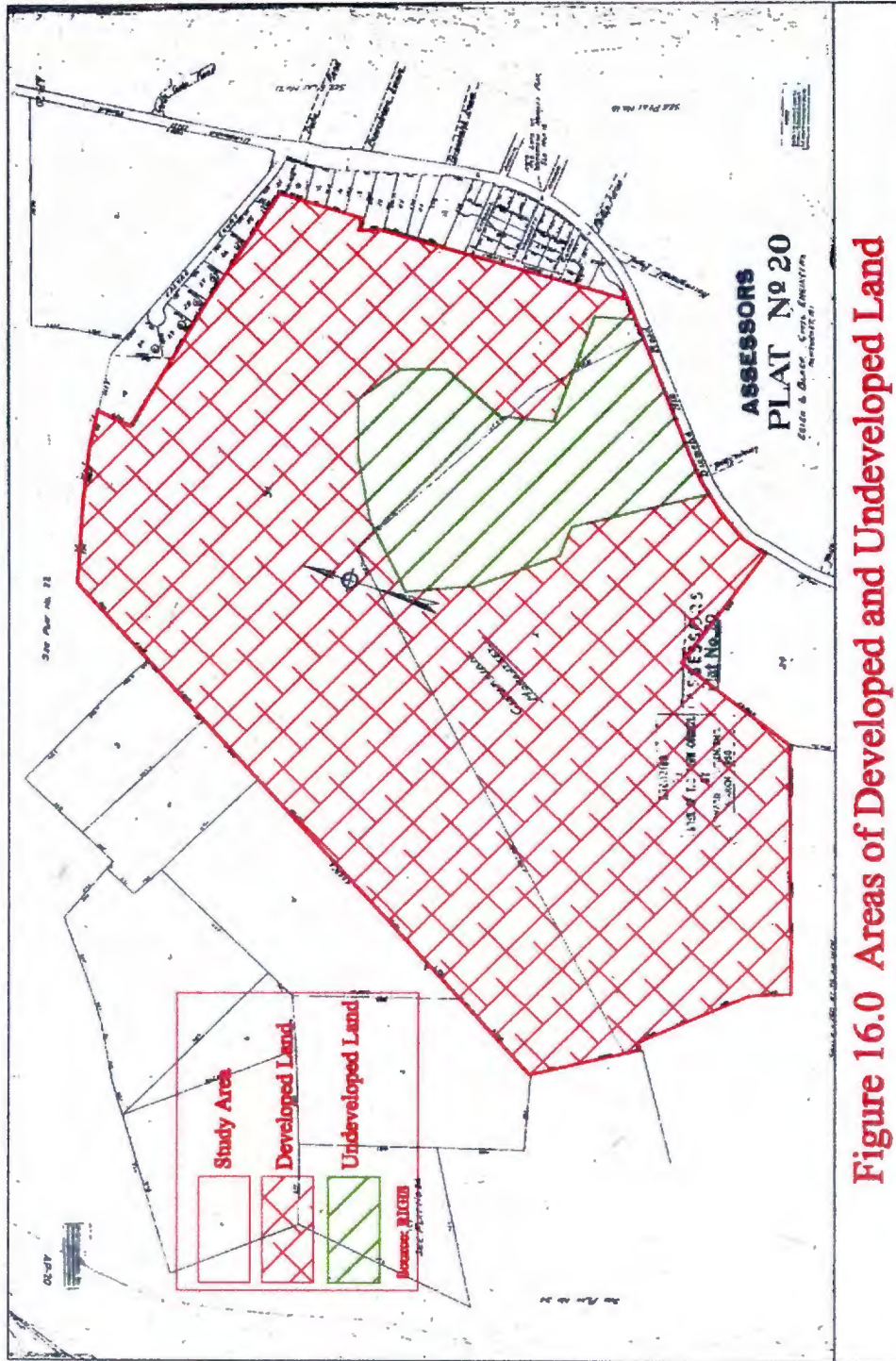
Land use in the vicinity of the study area is mostly residential. Dense, single-family neighborhoods flank the study area on almost all four sides. There are several commercial areas within walking distance of the site, a restaurant (Gardner's), and an auto body repair/ dealer. Low-density residential neighborhoods extend past the surrounding areas. Commercial development is scattered throughout Diamond Hill Road, with dense concentrations approximately five minutes north and south of the study area.

Electricity, water, telephone, natural gas, and sanitary sewers service the study area.



**Figure 15.0 Land Use in the Vicinity of the Monastery**





**Figure 16.0 Areas of Developed and Undeveloped Land**

### *The Former Cistercian Monastery*

The land that makes up Plat 18, Lot #1 was formerly a place of worship and contemplation. Today, it is a place of many uses, mostly unknown to the general public. The untapped potential for future development and use is the focus of this study.

This area is accessed from Diamond Hill Road, in the center of town. The public road into the property runs east off Diamond Hill Road, approaching the main gatehouse. At this point, it becomes a one-way road accessing the various buildings on the site. Eventually, this road terminates at the other end of the main gatehouse, continuing west to Diamond Hill Road. The one-way roads tends to restrict circulation within the site, yet functions to control speed and guide people.

The main entrance is a beautiful allee of Maples. To the north side, visitors can access the walking/-jogging trail by foot. To the south side, visitors have the option of two Veteran's Memorials, also accessed by foot. The main gatehouse is the only traffic control point within the site. Here, the road becomes a one-way traversing through the site.

Recently completed, the Public Library extension is the first activity point within the site. Parking for approximately forty vehicles serves the Public Library, playground, and outdoor theater. From this parking area, visitors can choose from two one-way roads, the first hugs the former Cistercian Monastery building complex, and the second traverses along the woodland edge of the developed areas of the site. The access road along the buildings brings visitors to the Senior Center entrance. Continuing through the site, a utility building and the vacant, former library site anchor the north side of the developed

area. The second access road (along the woodland edge) brings visitors to the Rhode Island Collaborative School, and the maintenance garage.





Figure 17.0 Entrance to the Monastery Site



Figure 18.0 Veteran's Memorial



Figure 19.0 Main Gate House



Figure 20.0 Edward J. Hayden Public Library





Figure 21.0 Cumberland Senior Center



Figure 22.0 Main Entrance Cumberland Senior Center



Figure 23.0 Utility Building



Figure 24.0 Vacant, Former Library Site



Figure 25.0 Rhode Island Collaborative School



Figure 26.0 Maintenance Garage





Figure 27.0 Children's Playground



Figure 28.0 Outdoor Theater





Figure 29.0 Picnic Area Adjacent to Senior Center



Figure 30.0 Shuffleboard Court



Figure 31.0 Mary Carpentier Memorial Garden



Figure 32.0 Walking/ Jogging Trail Entrance





Figure 33.0 Winter Skate Pond

### *Recreational Areas*

Both passive and active recreational areas already exist within the site. At the north end of the site is the children's playground and outdoor theater. Adjacent to the Senior Center is a picnic area and shuffleboard court. In front of the vacant library site and adjacent to the utility building is the Mary Carpentier Memorial Garden. A walking/-jogging trail surrounds the developed portion of the site, along the woodland edge. Off the playground and walking/ jogging trail is access to the winter skate pond.

### *Undeveloped Land*

Much of the study area is undeveloped land. Approximately 400 acres remains undeveloped. Within this woodland area, just off the main access road are several

abandoned roads leading into the undeveloped portion of the site terminating in an unplanned manner. There are several ponds, streams, open fields, and wetland areas throughout the densely forested undeveloped portion of the site.



## **Chapter Four**

### **Regulatory and Political Setting**

#### **Introduction**

The environmental features identified in the preceding chapter are significant to this study, due in part of the ecological importance of the areas as well as their tendency to make land development more difficult. These features are also significant because Federal, State, and Local laws regulate the way in which development can happen in or near environmentally sensitive features. The legal structure that constrains development also involves laws and ordinances that regulate land use in the interest of the public's health, safety, and welfare.

Due to its size, potential impacts to the community, and historical/ cultural value to Cumberland, a proposal for a redevelopment plan changing the use for the land would stimulate public interest. To identify the barriers that must be overcome to redevelop the Monastery, this chapter describes the regulatory setting to which land in Rhode Island in general, and Cumberland in particular, is subject. This chapter also describes the political setting that will inevitably affect the approval/ denial of any redevelopment plan. This plan relies heavily on issues identified in Cumberland's Comprehensive Plan, in an attempt to address these issues and meet future needs of the community.

#### **Regulatory Setting**

In Rhode Island, land development is regulated in several ways. Development regulations and local ordinances regulate land use, subdivision procedures, parcel size,

road widths, and other aspects of development. Because the study area contains freshwater wetlands and falls in part of the 100-Year Floodplain, State level regulations also apply. This section documents how laws and regulations will affect the way in which the study area may be developed.

### *Comprehensive Plan*

All municipalities in the State of Rhode Island are required to prepare a Comprehensive Plan to be a general, long-range guide to the physical, social, and economic development of the municipality. Zoning and subdivision regulations implement the vision of the Comprehensive Plan as required of communities by State Law. These regulations must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

A major consideration in the development of this plan is the Town of Cumberland's Comprehensive Plan, which was revised in 2003. Specific recommendations identified in the Comprehensive Plan under the Natural Resources Element, Public Services and Facilities Element, Cultural Resources Element, and Open Space/ Recreation Element have also been considered for further analysis in this study.

- **Natural Resource Element**

NR 1.2.1 – Acquire, through simple fee land purchase, conservation easements, or purchase of development rights unique ecological areas, watersheds, and special natural resource areas.

- **Cultural Resource Element**

CR 5.1.1 – Design, produce, and distribute interpretive materials that describe the historical, cultural, and recreational resources of the Town.

- **Public Service and Facilities Element**

**FS 8.2.1 – Develop a program of public school improvements and renovations to accommodate the anticipated increase in capacity required by increased development.**

- **Recreation and Open Space Element**

**OS 1.2.1 – Develop playgrounds in planning districts 2 and 3.**

**OS 1.2.2 – Acquire additional parcels for the construction of needed recreational opportunities.**

**OS 1.3.1 – Coordinate the construction of new school facilities to include multiple purpose recreational areas for both school and Town uses.**

**OS 1.4.1 – Continue the Recreation Department’s aggressive program promoting awareness of Cumberland’s recreational opportunities.**

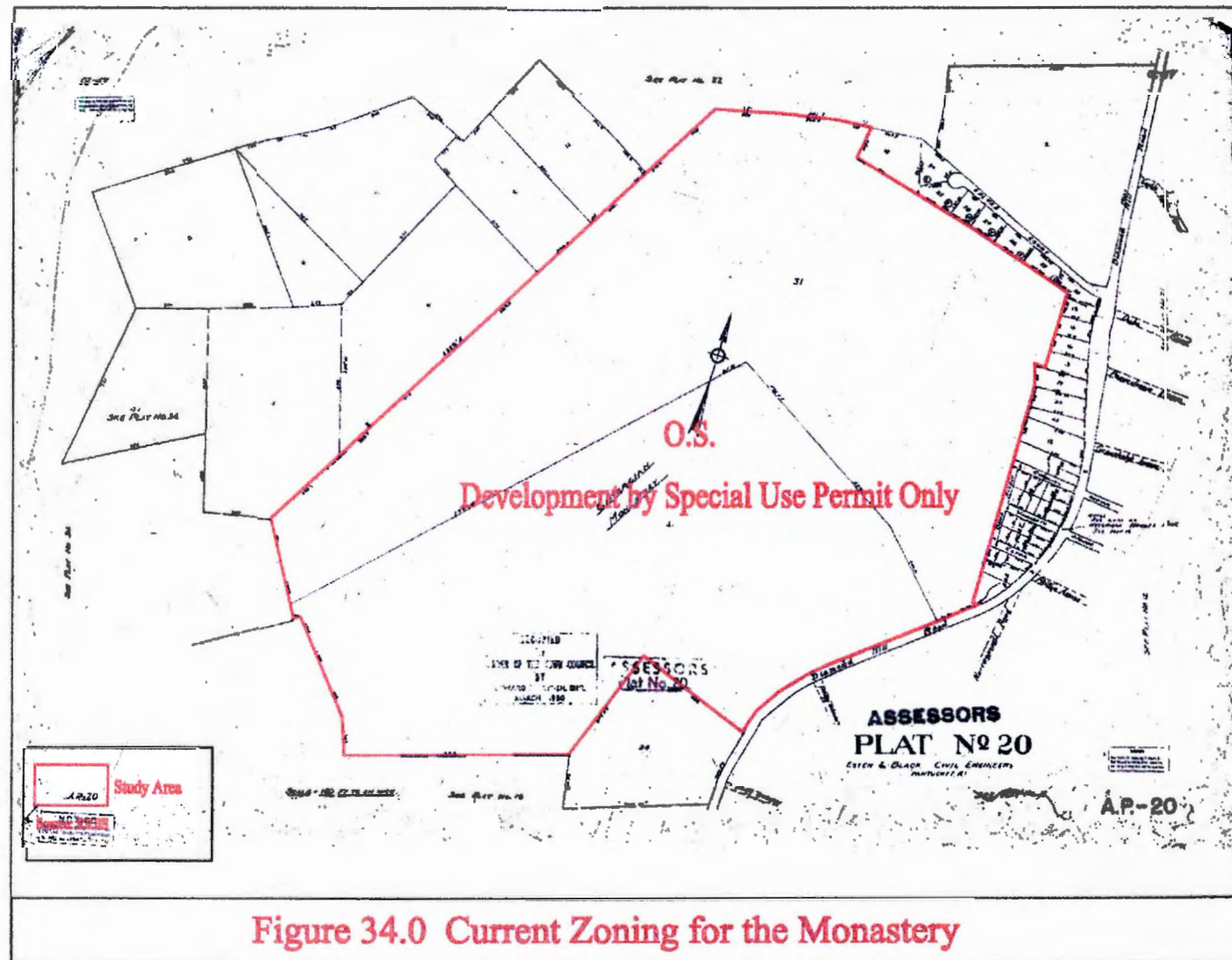
**OS 3.1.1 - Establish specific annual open space acquisition targets to continue the highly successful program of open space acquisition.**

**OS 3.1.5 - Coordinate efforts with the Cumberland Land Trust to identify and acquire tracts of land that will enlarge existing protected parcels in order to create a large area of contiguous open space from the Monastery to Diamond Hill Park called the Cumberland Greenway.**

**OS 3.4.3 - Consider acquisition of lands adjacent to existing protected areas for protection of significant plant and animal populations and communities and to provide passive recreational opportunities.**

## *Zoning*

Cumberland's Zoning Ordinance (1994) regulates the way in which land may be put to use. The Zoning Ordinance addresses such issues as land use, lot sizes, and the area of lots that may be used for structures. Under Cumberland's current ordinance, the land in the study area is zoned to comply with the Comprehensive Plan. The land's current zoning is for open space, with development by Special Use Permit only, for educational facilities (preschool) and Town Government. Non-profit community parks/ playgrounds and Town Community Centers are both allowed under the current zoning ordinance.



**Figure 34.0 Current Zoning for the Monastery**

### *Department of Environmental Management*

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) regulates land development in the State. The Fresh Water Wetlands Act (1971) states that no freshwater wetland shall in any way be altered without approval from the Director of RIDEM. Alteration is defined by activities that occur within or outside of freshwater wetlands that impact their natural character, functions, and/ or values. Alteration activities include filling, excavating, and diverting flow into or out of wetlands. RIDEM also regulates the installation of septic systems and sewers. The Rhode Island Discharge Elimination System Regulations (RIDDES), enforced by RIDEM, regulates runoff from construction sites when five or more acres of land are disturbed. If stormwater runoff is directed into a storm sewer system, or into waters of the site, a permit must be obtained.

### **Political setting**

Issues of impact on Town services will be paramount to the Town Council. These issues include snowplowing, street lighting, road maintenance, and sewer services. The Town will have to demonstrate that the positive impacts to the Town will outweigh the negative ones. In addition, the Town would have to show that the redevelopment plan would conform to and address issues identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

Public participation early on in the planning process is crucial to the creation and approval of a redevelopment plan.

## **Chapter Five**

### **A Redevelopment Plan for the Monastery**

#### **Introduction**

A concept for the redevelopment of the study area into a Community Resource Complex will be presented in this chapter. This plan will include: the relocation of Town Hall; the creation of a preschool educational facility; enhanced and expanded passive and active recreation areas; open space acquisitions and linkages; a maintenance and stewardship plan for both public and privately-owned open spaces; and the creation of a 'sense of place' for the residents of Cumberland. This chapter will also discuss New Urbanism principles for integrated, mixed-use developments. Concept plans, suggestions for rehabilitation of structures, urban design guidelines and sketches are also included.

#### **Mixed-Use and the New Urbanism**

Principles of New Urbanism – an urban design movement are appropriate to the design of this redevelopment plan. Since around the 1980's, New Urbanism aims to remedy many of the problems associated with suburban sprawl. Generally, New Urbanists call for sustainable development patterns – a mix of housing, civic, recreational and commercial uses. This type of development enables residents of a community to walk, rather than drive to a separate location to shop, work, or recreate. This type of dense development pattern not only encourages people to interact, it preserves open space.



Although this redevelopment plan removes the housing and commercial component of a mixed-use village development, it does incorporate the concepts of a 'Town Center' that is pedestrian oriented and that provides services and activities to a multi-generational array of people. Cumberland lacks a defined Town Center. This redevelopment plan not only addresses issues identified in the Town's Comprehensive Plan, it expands on it, giving residents both young and old, a central, familiar location where something is always happening. Through public participation and collaboration, many New Urbanist principles can be integrated into the redevelopment of the Monastery.

#### **A Redevelopment Plan for the Monastery**

The biggest hurdle to any redevelopment plan – ownership/ acquisition, does not present an issue for this redevelopment plan as the Monastery is already owned by the Town of Cumberland. In addition, no new buildings have been proposed, only rehabilitation of existing, vacant structures. In conjunction with no new buildings, the appropriate infrastructure is on-site: roads; lighting; parking; and utilities.

the goal of this redevelopment plan is to maintain the over 400 plus acres of undeveloped space, and utilize/ rehabilitate the existing developed areas to the maximum benefit of the Town and its residents.

## **Rehabilitation of Existing Structures**

### ***Preschool Educational Facility***

Currently the Town's preschool and elementary facilities fall short of their needs. Enrollment numbers do not warrant the need for an entire education facility, yet they are enough to warrant renting space in the rectory of Fatima Church, located in Valley Falls.

This section of the plan proposes to rehabilitate a utility building adjacent to the Senior Center. The structure is large enough to accommodate several classrooms, as well as administrative offices, and indoor recreation space. Immediate road access is just outside the south side of the building, with the remaining sides fronting open lawn areas. The proximity to the Public Library, playground, and walking/-jogging trail offers a variety of opportunities just outside the front door.

### ***Relocation of Town Hall***

Town Hall, located at the terminus of historic Broad Street has outgrown its building. Not only does the building no longer function in meeting the needs of Town officials and staff, the building is located at the southern-most boundary of the Town – not the most central location for all Cumberland residents. The surrounding area is subject to flooding, jeopardizing one of the Town's most vital infrastructure buildings. The building itself is a historic landmark with its brick facade and clock tower. Once inside, one is hard-pressed not to notice the disorganized arrangement of services, as well as the more than outdated environment.

This proposal recommends utilizing the vacant, former library space. In addition, this proposal calls for the restoration of the second floor of the Cistercian Monastery's Chapel

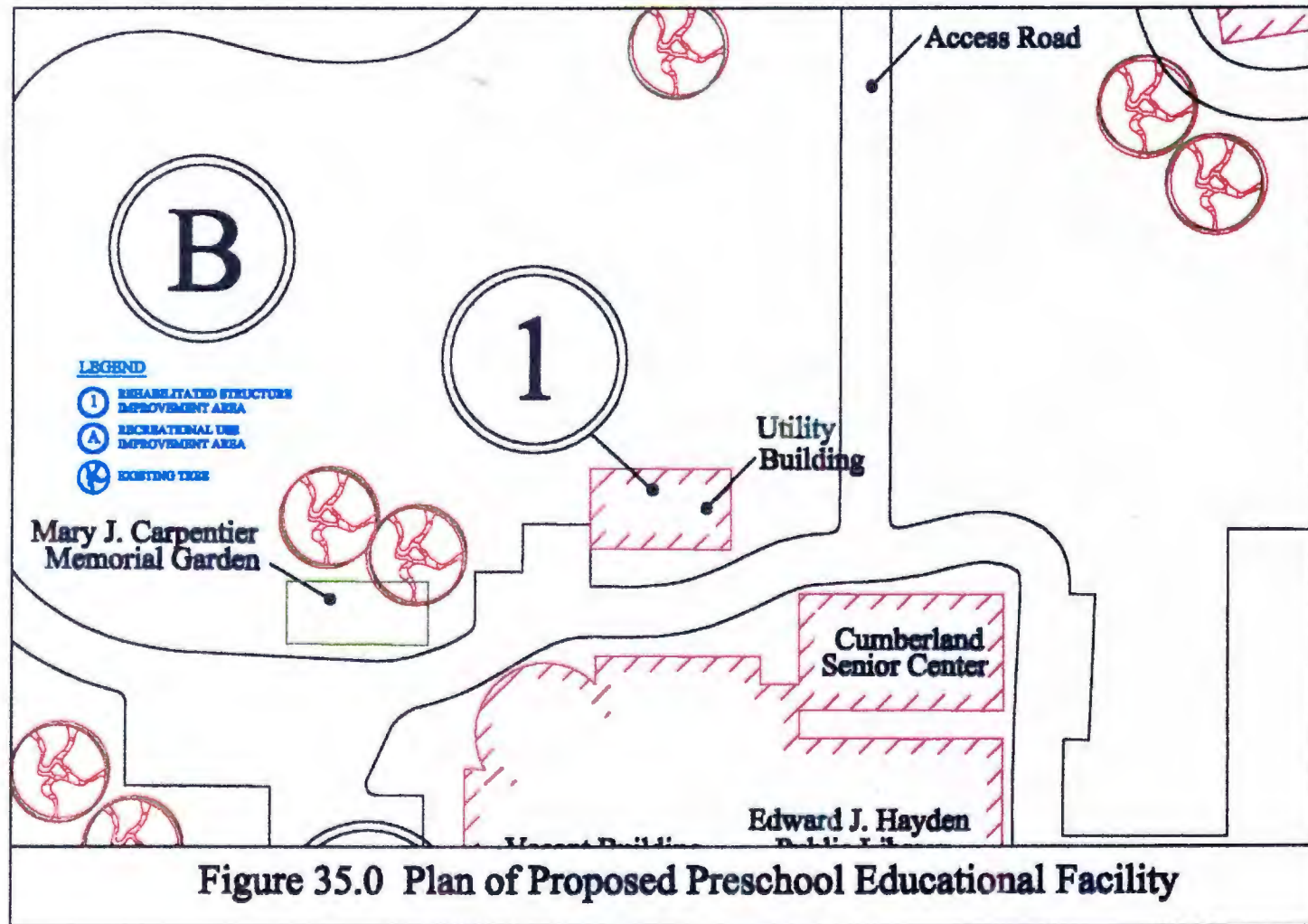
and Guest Quarters – with particular attention to the Pigeon-gray granite facade. This was one of the areas completely destroyed in the 1950 fire. Restoration of this area, would not only enhance the site visually, it would bring the original building complex close to its former glory of the early 1900's. Once the restoration project was complete, Town Hall services would more than adequately settle in space wise, with an abundance of room to grow for future needs. Also, a more centralized location would better serve the residents of the Town. Ample parking and lighting remains in good condition from the former use as the Public Library.

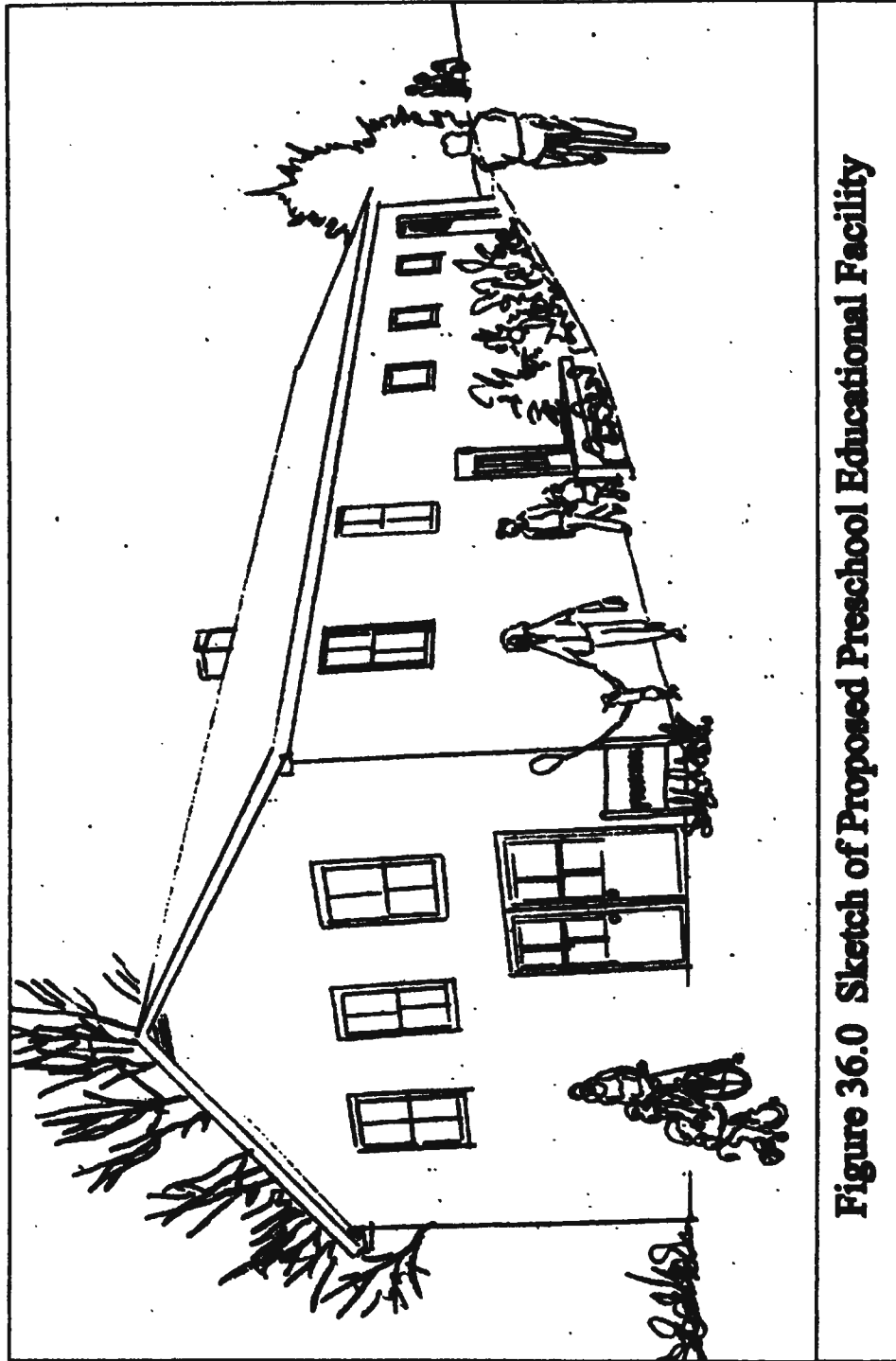
A plan should also be considered for a new use of the current, historic Town hall should Town Hall services be relocated.

#### *Cumberland Information Center*

The main gatehouse to the Monastery serves no permanent use currently. It is the main terminus to the entrance, and a natural place one could stop and get information.

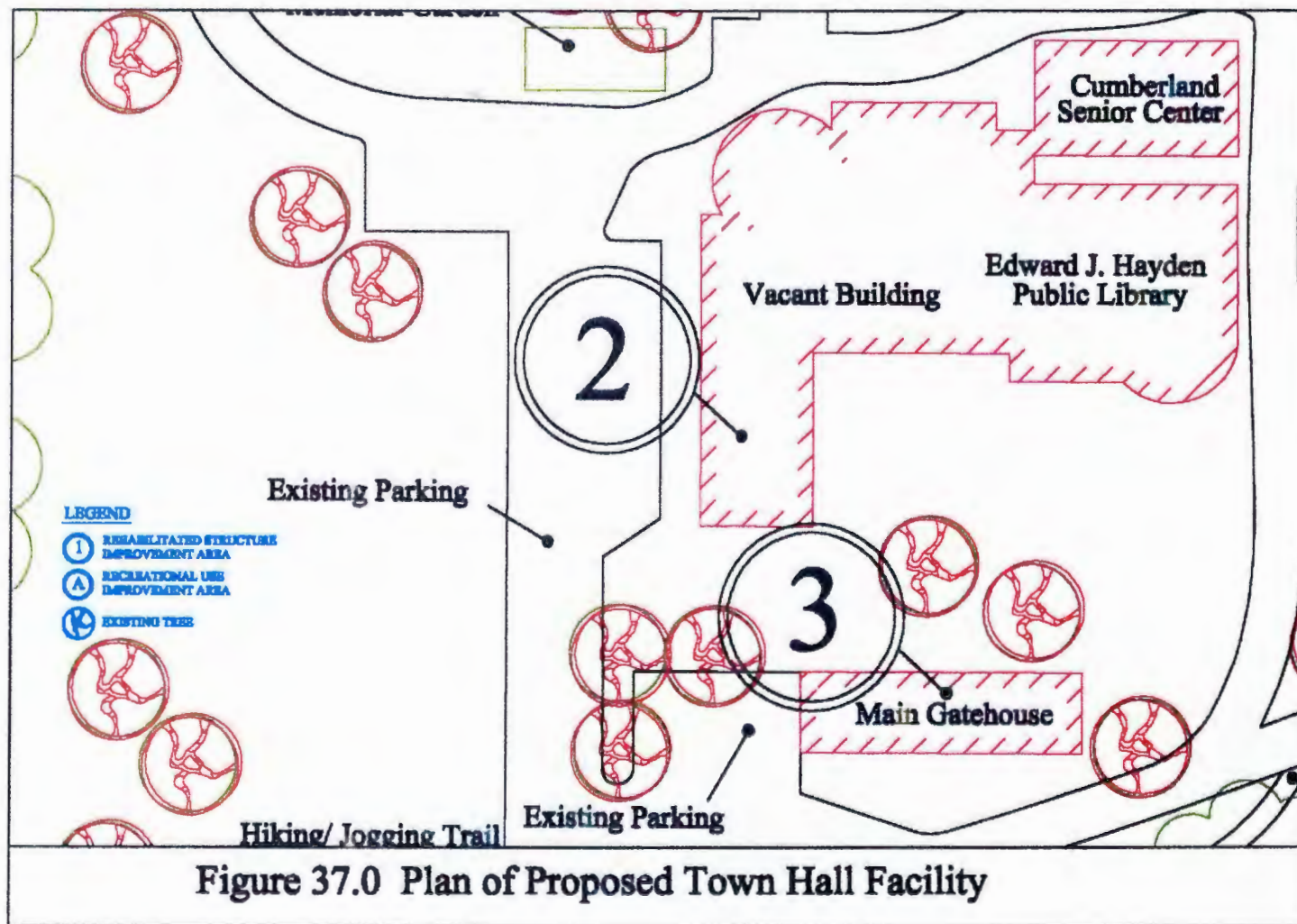
This plan proposes the main gate house not only serve as the information center for the Monastery, but also as the main administrative offices for planning events, activities, and park space reservations for the entire Town. This office could also prepare seasonal and annual mailings of events/ activities going on within the Town.

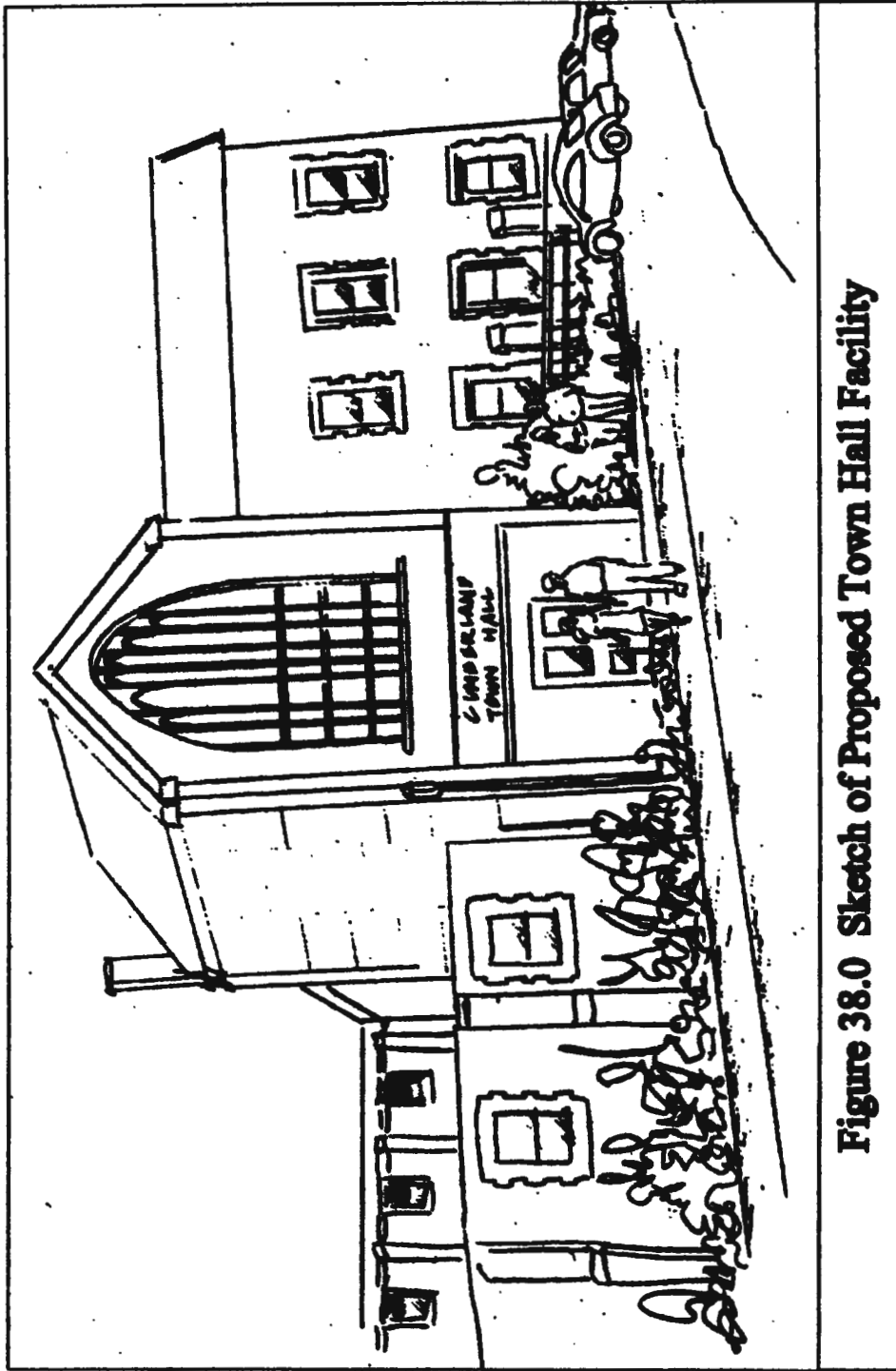




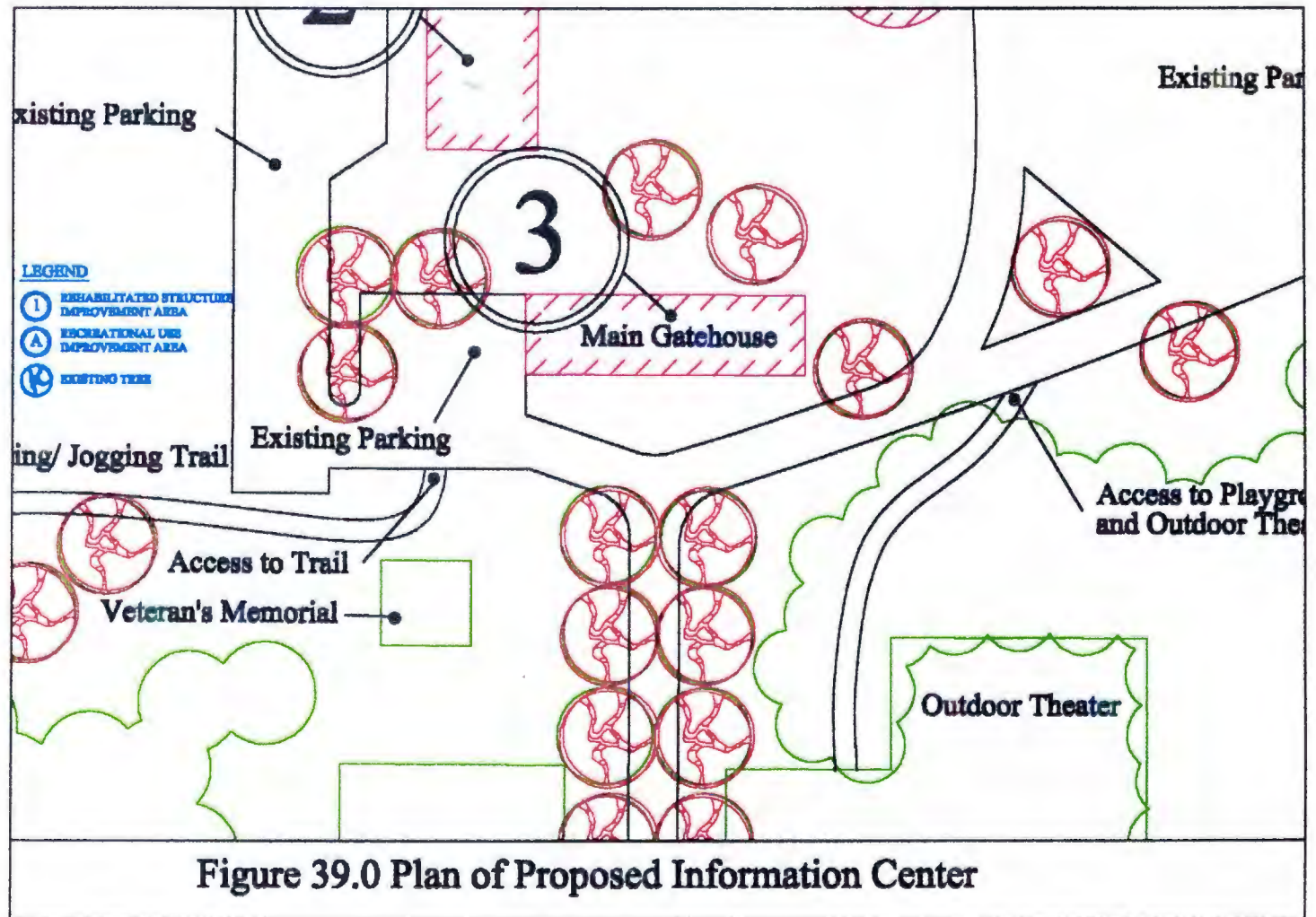
**Figure 36.0 Sketch of Proposed Preschool Educational Facility**

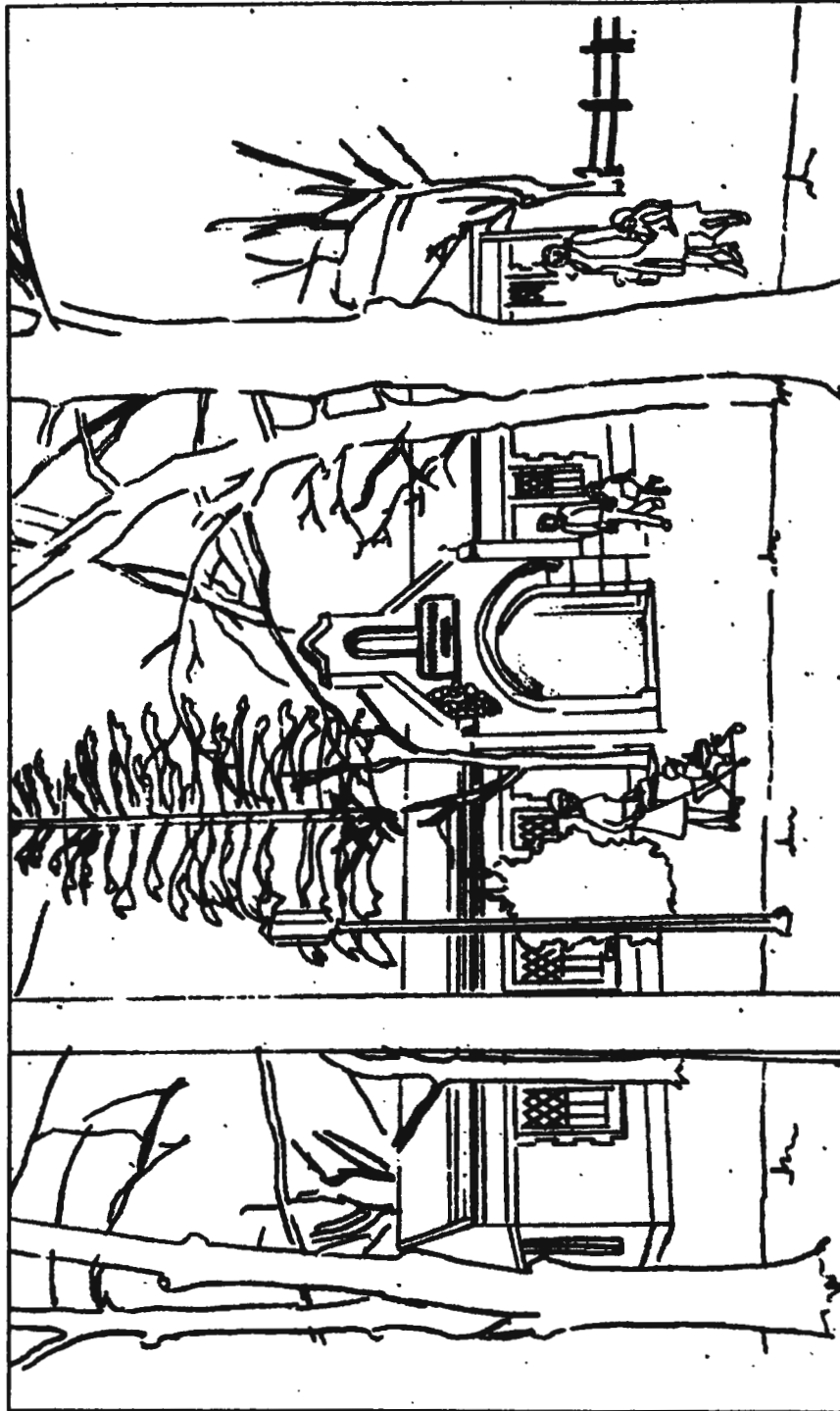






**Figure 38.0 Sketch of Proposed Town Hall Facility**





**Figure 40.0 Sketch of Proposed Information Center**

## **Open Space**

There are 62 parcels of land (4,488 acres) dedicated to open space and conservation purposes in the Town of Cumberland. Of these 4,488 acres, 1292 acres are Town-owned, 1,084 acres are owned by the Pawtucket Water Supply Board, and 284 acres are owned by the State of Rhode Island. Remaining acreage amounts are either privately owned, or owned by private environmental groups such as The Cumberland Land Trust.

### ***Public Open Space***

All open space owned by the Town of Cumberland and State of Rhode Island is generally accessible by the public for passive recreational uses. The Cumberland Land Trust holds three nature preserves that are also accessible to the public. A need for management plans of these areas is identified in the Comprehensive Plan.



<b>Table 1.0 Public Open Space</b>		
<i>Town of Cumberland</i>		
	Size	
Name	(Acres)	Use/ Characteristics
Lambert Property	27.5	N/A
Franklin Farms	65.4	Farmland
Sneech Pond Reservoir	156	Water Supply
Lawrence Property/ Tower Hill	50	Open Space
Gainsborough Farm	84	Farmland
Scott Pond Conservation Area	98.5	Wetlands/ Passive Recreation
Fanning Wilderness	40.3	Wetlands/ Marsh
Schofield Farm	68	Farmland
Oblate Bros./ Manville Hill	25.4	
Valley Marshes	55	Wetlands
Long Brook	90.8	Wetlands
Lippett Estates	32	Open Space
Blackall Property	56	Open Space
<i>Cumberland Land Trust</i>		
High Rock Farm Preserve	69.1	Rare Plant Species, Bluebird trail
Otis Smith Farm Preserve	53	Passive Recreation
Geddes Bowen Wildlife Preserve	34	Wildlife Habitat, Passive Recreation
<i>State of Rhode Island</i>		
Home Ave. Conservation Area	1.5	Conservation
Diamond Hill Reservation	262	Conservation
Blackstone River/ Valley Marshes	22	Wetlands

*Source: Comprehensive Plan*

### *Privately-held Open Space*

Privately owned land in excess of 2,369 acres in Cumberland is also protected from development. The Cumberland Land Trust owns ten parcels (230 acres), the City of Pawtucket owns over 1,500 acres for water quality protection services, and the Audubon Society owns two parcels (30.9 acres).

<b>Table 2.0 Private Open Space</b>	
Owner	Acres
Audubon Society	30.9
City of Pawtucket	1528
Cumberland Land Trust	230
<i>Private</i>	
Conservation Easement	151.3
Cluster Open Space	297.8
Other	74.2

*Source: Comprehensive Plan*

Within the Town, there is no specific method for determining open space acquisition priorities. Suggestions do include expansion of the Cumberland Greenway, creation of a pedestrian trail system, acquisition of the Drop Zone Community Center, as well as land adjacent to existing protected properties.

According to Rhode Island's Statewide Planning program almost thirty-four percent of Cumberland was developed as of 1995. Since 1995, this percentage had increased due to residential subdivisions. Currently, twenty-six percent of Cumberland's land area is under some kind of protection from development. Estimates leave approximately forty percent of Cumberland with the potential of being developed, although this also represents future opportunities for acquisition of open space. According to the Comprehensive Plan, the following properties are recommended for future acquisition:

<b>Table 3.0 Recommended Acquisitions</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>2003 Status</b>
Mill St. Riverfront Park	75	Not Acquired
Angell Farm		Remains a high priority
Diamond Hill Vineyards	33	Remains a high priority
Phantom Farms	15	Remains a high priority

*Source: Comprehensive Plan*

### **The Cumberland Greenway**

The Cumberland Land Trust is a private, non-profit, charitable conservation organization locally controlled by Cumberland resident members dedicated to the preservation and creation of greenspace and a greenways plan for the Town of Cumberland. The Land Trust applies for grants from private foundations, organizations, and government sources to acquire select properties. Since 1989, over 240 acres of land has been acquired through purchase, donation, and conservation easements. the Cumberland Land trust is currently working with The Land Trust Alliance, The Nature

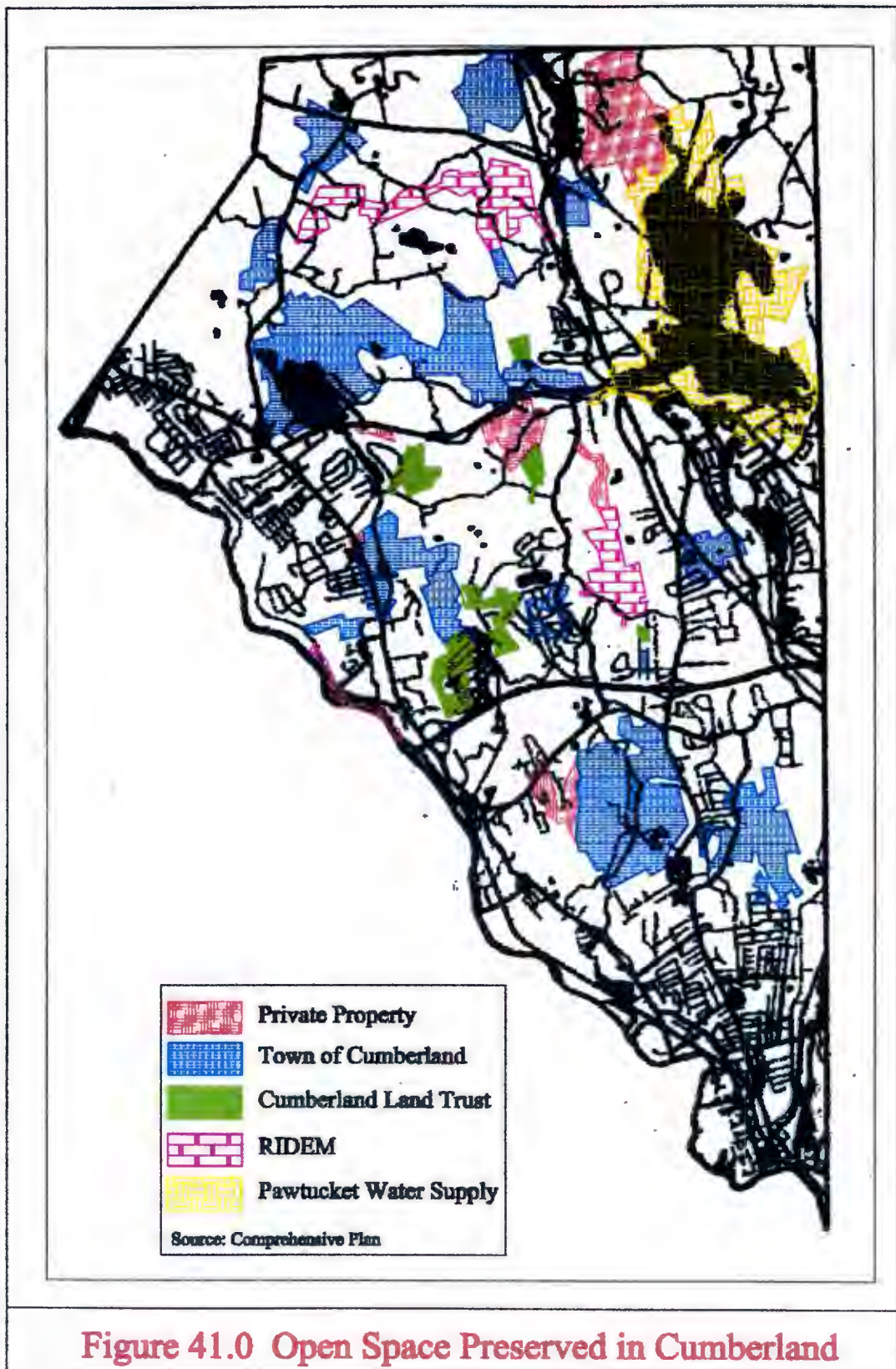
Conservancy of Rhode Island, The Rhode Island Audubon Society, and forty-three other land trusts in the State to establish the Cumberland Greenway.

A vision plan of the Cumberland Land Trust – to create one contiguous area of open space from the Monastery to Diamond Hill Park. Presently, the central artery of the Cumberland Greenway runs east to west and includes Tucker Field, the Scott Brook Conservation Area, the Baskin property, the Brown and Rowbottom Properties, Lippitt Estates, and the Long brook Conservation Area. The Monastery is the largest parcel of protected open space/ recreation within the community, and a vital element to linking other properties.

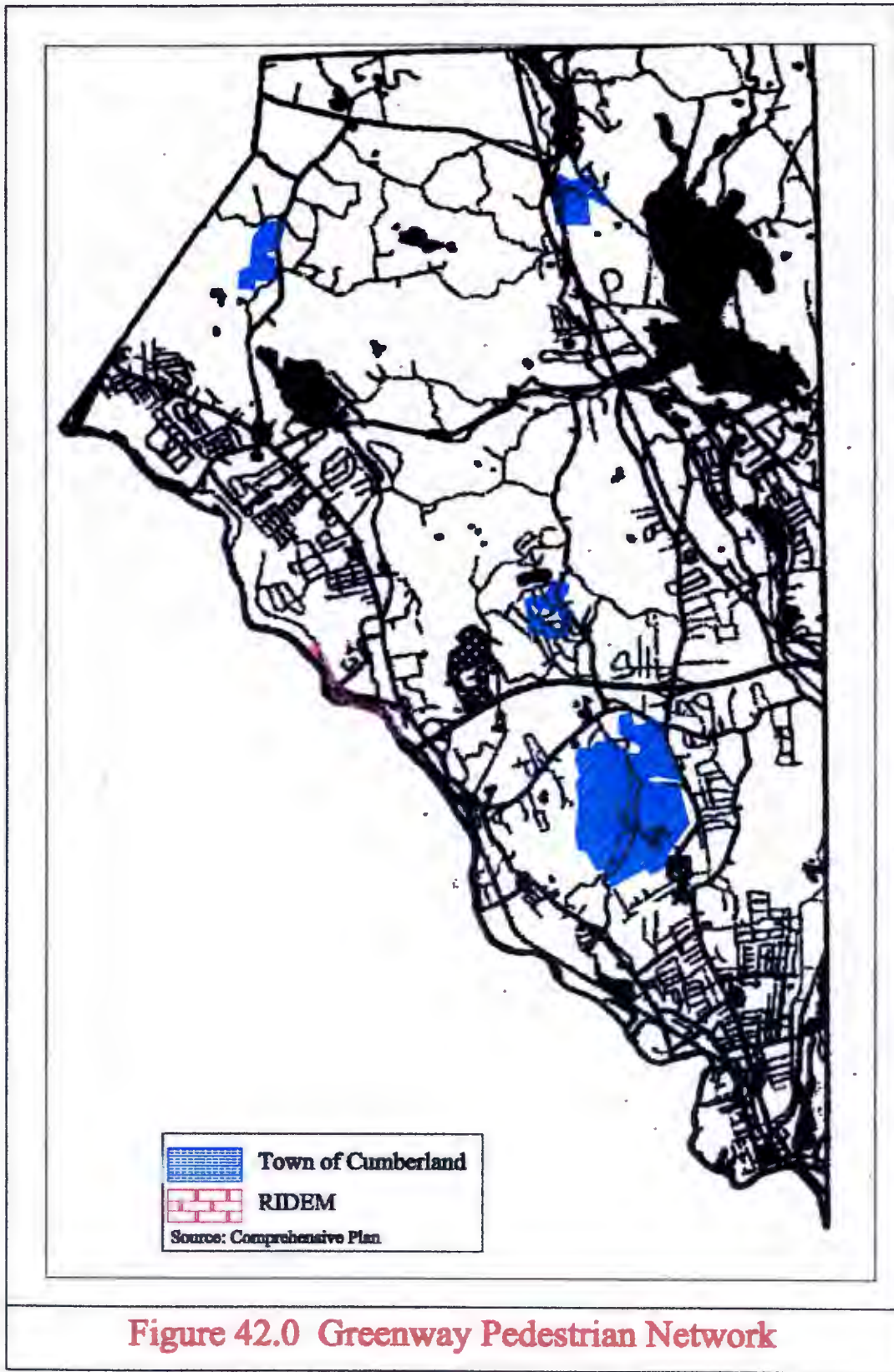
### **Cumberland Pedestrian Trail System**

Currently, several hiking and pedestrian trails exist in Cumberland. Unfortunately, their use is limited by their lack of interconnectivity. Extending these trail systems and creating linkages between open space parcels is a priority for the Town.

The Warner Trail, a 34-mile long trail that extends from Canton, MA to Diamond Hill Park was created prior to World War II. It connects public parcels including Town forests and private property. Extending this trail through Cumberland and connecting it through to the Blackstone Heritage Corridor is also a priority for the Town.







**Figure 42.0 Greenway Pedestrian Network**



## **Rhode Island State Planning Program**

The need to protect individual sites while also linking parcels with continuous open space corridors is the concept of 'Greenspace' and 'Greenway Planning' programs.

Analysis of resource types: Natural Resources such as wildlife habitat, wetlands, and aquifers; Cultural Resources such as historic rural landscapes, scenic vistas, and farmlands; and Recreational Resources such as athletic fields and hiking trails is critical in identifying priority protection measures and linkage potential between them. Creative open space planning can also address other community concerns such as cultural activity support, establishing pedestrian networks, meeting increased infrastructure needs, and preserving a community's character by creating a 'sense of place'.

Under the Rhode Island State Planning Program, the Greenways Council coordinates State Agency greenway efforts, assists local governments and private groups in greenway efforts, and provides information to the public on the availability and usage of greenways in Rhode Island. Greenways foster social, cultural, and economic intercourse, bringing diverse populations together with a common purpose. The Open Space and Recreation Element of the Statewide Plan calls for:

- An inventory of existing open space and recreation facilities, including consideration of access to such areas.
- An analysis of the forecasted needs of the local population for open space/ recreation activities.
- Development of municipal policies for the provision, management, and protection of open space/ recreation opportunities.

- An implementation program designed to achieve local open space/ recreation goals and satisfy forecasted needs.

## **Recreational Areas**

Cumberland is a community that greatly values its recreational resources.

Recreational facilities fall into two general categories: places for active play and areas for passive enjoyment of nature. Some facilities may provide opportunities for both types of recreation, as these categories are not mutually exclusive.

### ***Active Recreation***

In general, considered to be recreation of a structured nature, requiring specific facilities. Types of recreational facilities that primarily serve as places for active recreation include:

- Playlots – Neighborhood play areas intended for preschool age children.
- Playgrounds – Neighborhood play areas for the needs of the 5 to 12-year age group.
- Playfields – Areas that generally serve more than one neighborhood and provide for a variety of activities for young people and adults.
- Special Areas – Areas developed for special use such as a municipal swimming pool, golf course, or skate park.

## *Passive Recreation*

Passive recreation requires a minimum of facilities or equipment and generally takes place in a natural setting. Activities include walking, hiking, and bird watching. Types of recreational facilities that primarily serve as places for passive recreation include:

- Neighborhood Parks – Areas for sitting, relaxation, and contemplation.
- Major Parks or Reservations – Large parks that provide for a variety of recreational activities, with large areas left natural.
- Linear parks – Areas for recreational travel, built on natural corridors such as utility easements, rivers, and abandoned rail lines.

Cumberland owns approximately 670 acres of land dedicated to recreation. This includes five playgrounds and twelve playfields primarily used for active recreation, as well as two major parks (the Monastery and Diamond Hill Park) which are used for both active and passive recreation.

<b>Table 4.0 Cumberland's Active Recreation Areas</b>
<i>Playgrounds</i>
Ashton School
Community School
Cumberland Hill School
Currier Play Area
Monastery
<i>Walking/ Jogging</i>
Monastery
Tucker Field Track
<i>Ball Fields</i>
Diamond Hill Park: One Little League Field
Bentley/ Razee: One Babe Ruth/ One Soft Ball Field
Razee Field: One Little League Field
Garvin Field: One Little League Field
High St. Field: One Little League Field
BF Norton: One Little League Field
Berkeley Oval: One Babe Ruth Field
Farm Drive: One Little League Field
Cumberland Hill School: One Little League/ One soccer field

*Source: Comprehensive Plan*

<b>Table 5.0 Cumberland's Passive Recreation Areas</b>	
<b>Diamond Hill Park</b>	Picnic areas, outdoor stage, restroom building, ski lodge building, ball field.
<b>Monastery</b>	Picnic areas, hiking/ walking trails, outdoor stage, veteran's memorial, playground, restroom building.
<b>Fanning Wilderness Area</b>	Wilderness/ open space areas.
<b>Valley Falls Heritage Park</b>	Picnic area, educational interpretive panels, historic.
<b>Moran Family Park</b>	Areas for sitting.
<b>Blackstone Memorial Park</b>	Historic.

*Source: Comprehensive Plan*

### **Enhanced Active and Passive Recreation Areas**

The Monastery is considered a major park within the Town of Cumberland.

Recreational opportunities currently include: picnic areas; shuffleboard court; walking/ jogging trail; outdoor theater; playground; Veteran's memorial; restrooms; and 400 plus acres of open space.

### ***Proposed Senior Center Outdoor Improvements***

This plan proposes the addition of a variety of both active and passive recreational activities. Adjacent to the current Senior Center is a large picnic area equipped with approximately forty picnic tables, trash receptacles, and a shuffleboard court. The addition of barbecue pits, a bocce court, and horseshoe pits would greatly expand recreational opportunities not only for the senior population, but residents as a whole. This area could become one of many destinations within the study area for individual family use, as well as accommodating larger groups/ clubs within the Town.

### *Proposed Athletic Fields*

To the west of the Senior Center, proposed preschool, and Town Hall are large maintained grass areas. This plan calls for the creation of a baseball and softball field sited opposite each other, sharing this unused space. Equipment necessary to bring this concept to life would include the installation of two backstops, interior bases, and benches. Lighting is considered an option for evening use of the site.

### *Proposed Camping Areas*

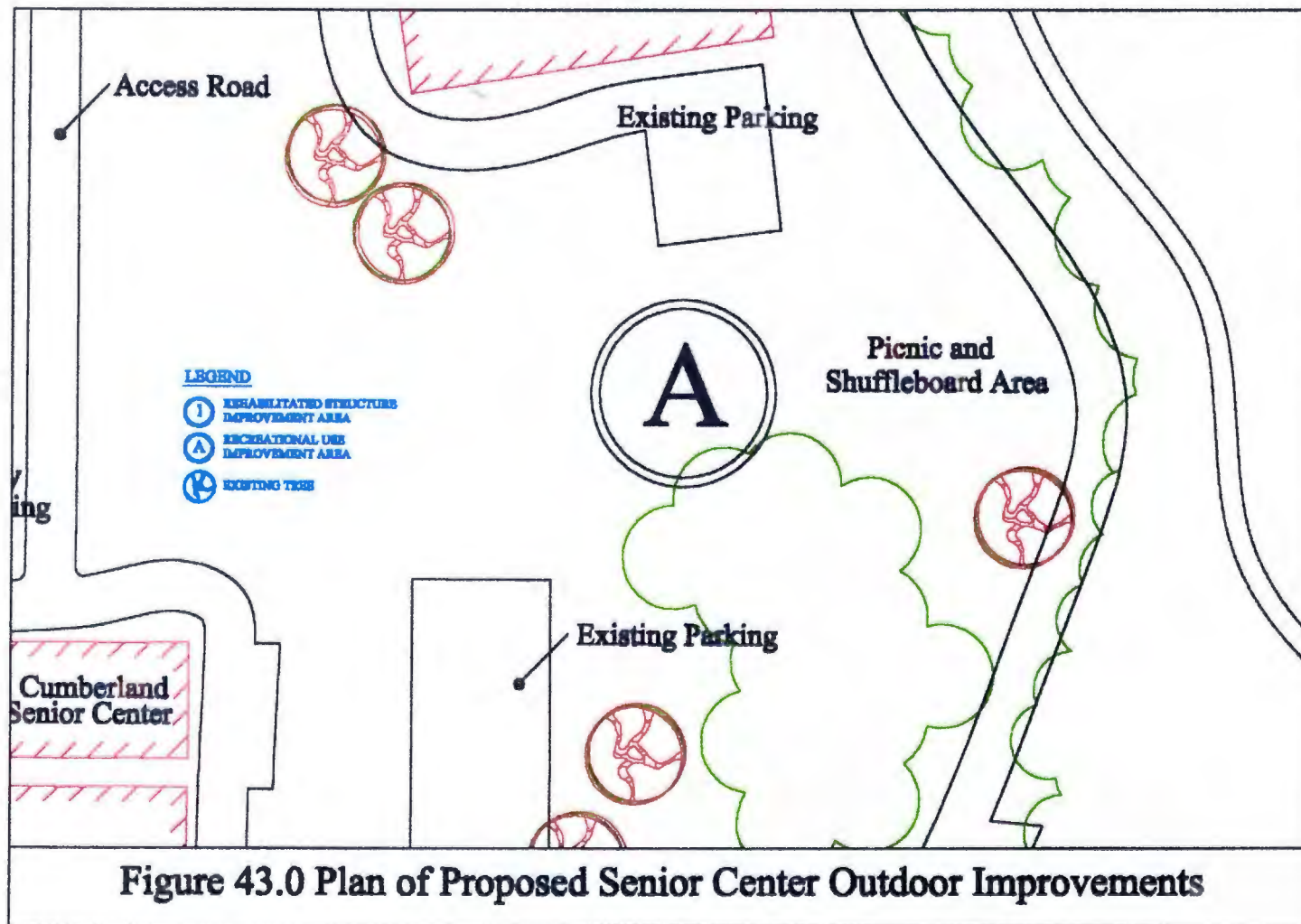
Just beyond the proposed athletic fields, approximately 3-4 minutes into the woodland portion of the study area, exists open expanses of successional fields surrounded by dense woodland. These fields could become camping areas utilized by Boy/ Girl Scout Troops within the Town. During the 1970's, these fields were in fact utilized by Scout Troops for weekend camping outings and regional Jamborees. Since the 1970's, camping has ceased to occur on the site.

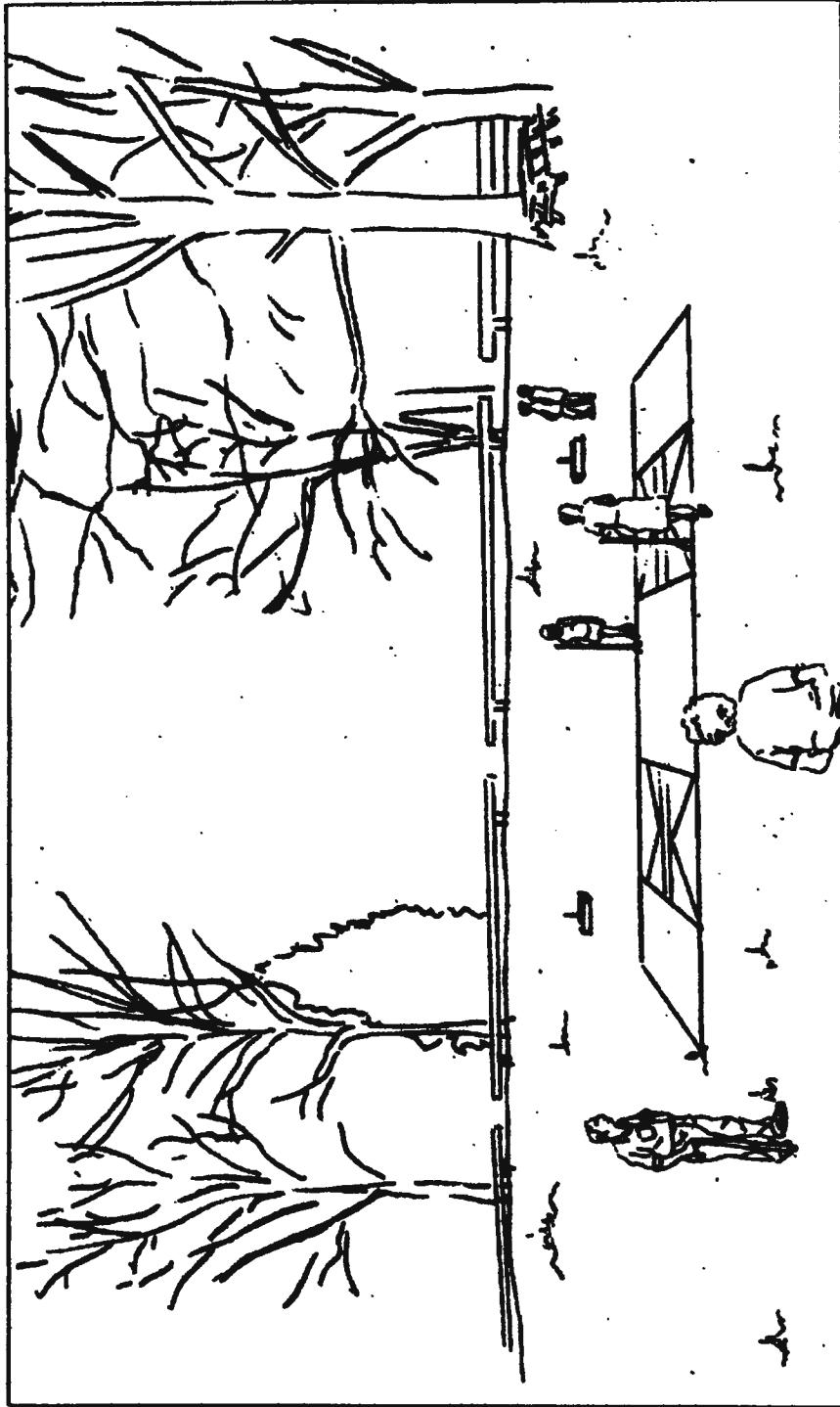
### *Utilities*

As described in Chapter Three, the Monastery is already serviced by water, electricity, gas, and sanitary sewers. Additional restrooms should be considered with regards to 'green', environmentally sensitive amenities.

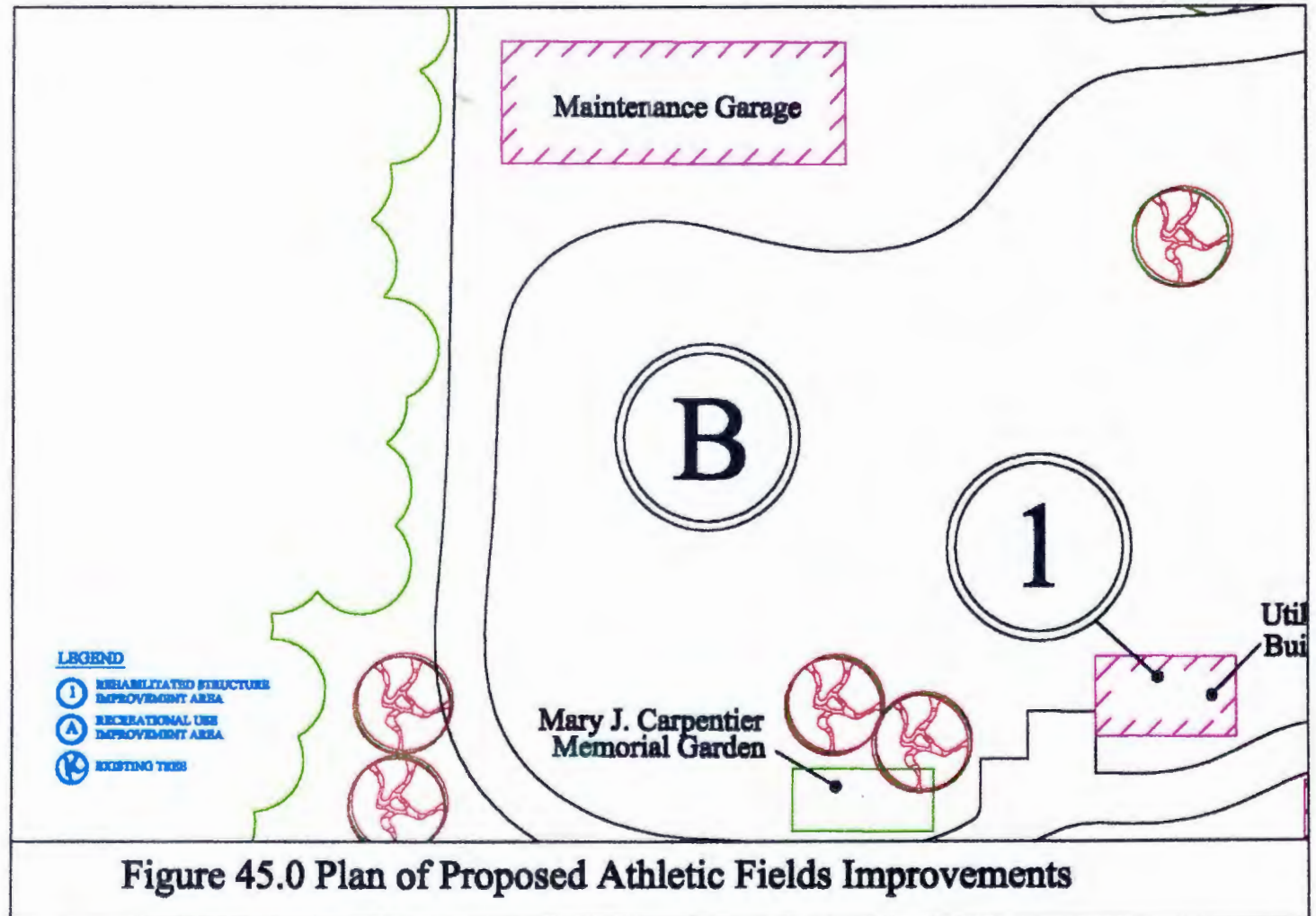
Stormwater that falls on the paved surface of the Monastery is carried either overland or through storm drains that already exist. Since this redevelopment plan calls for reuse of existing roads and parking areas, no net increase in impervious surface coverage is expected.

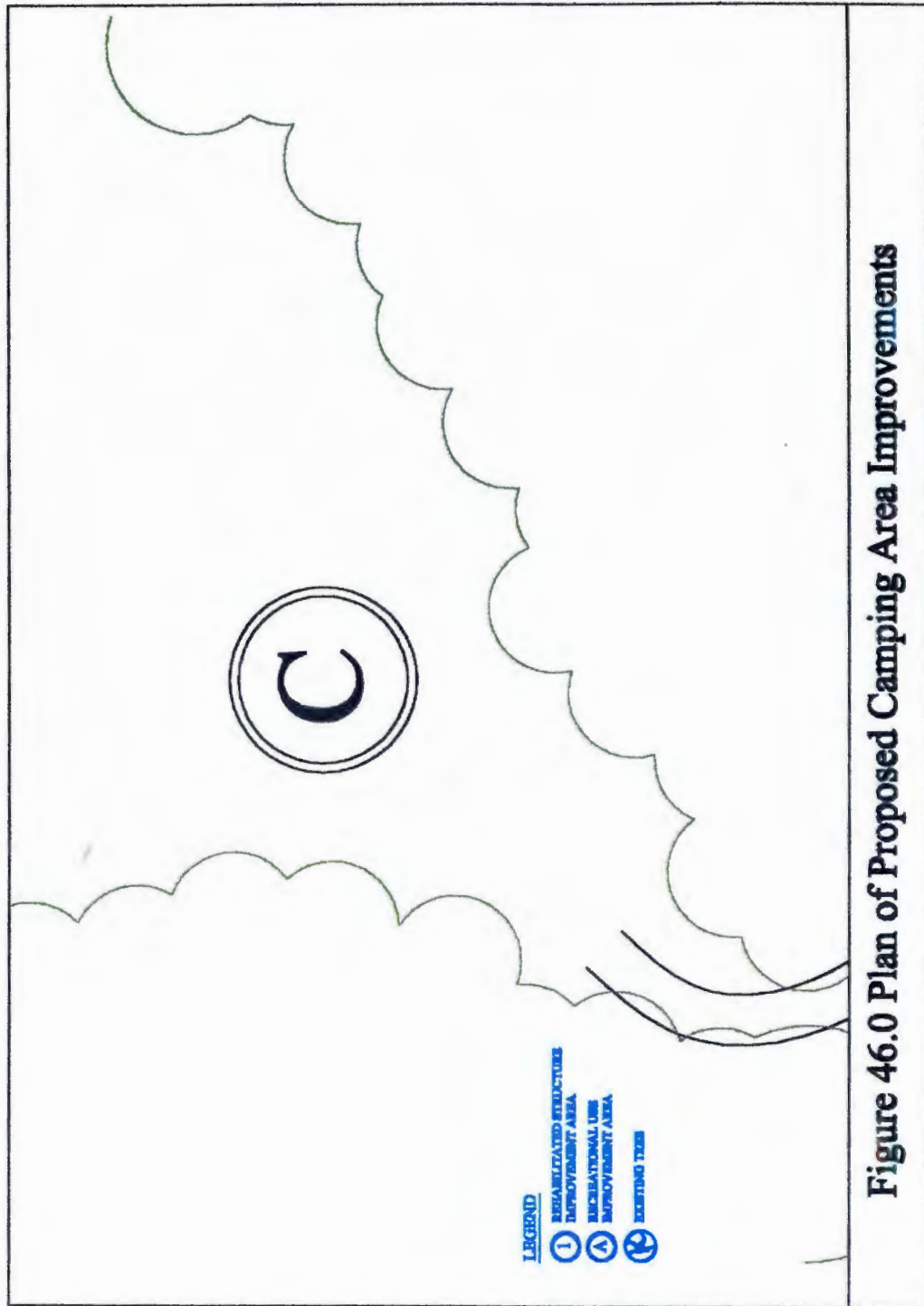




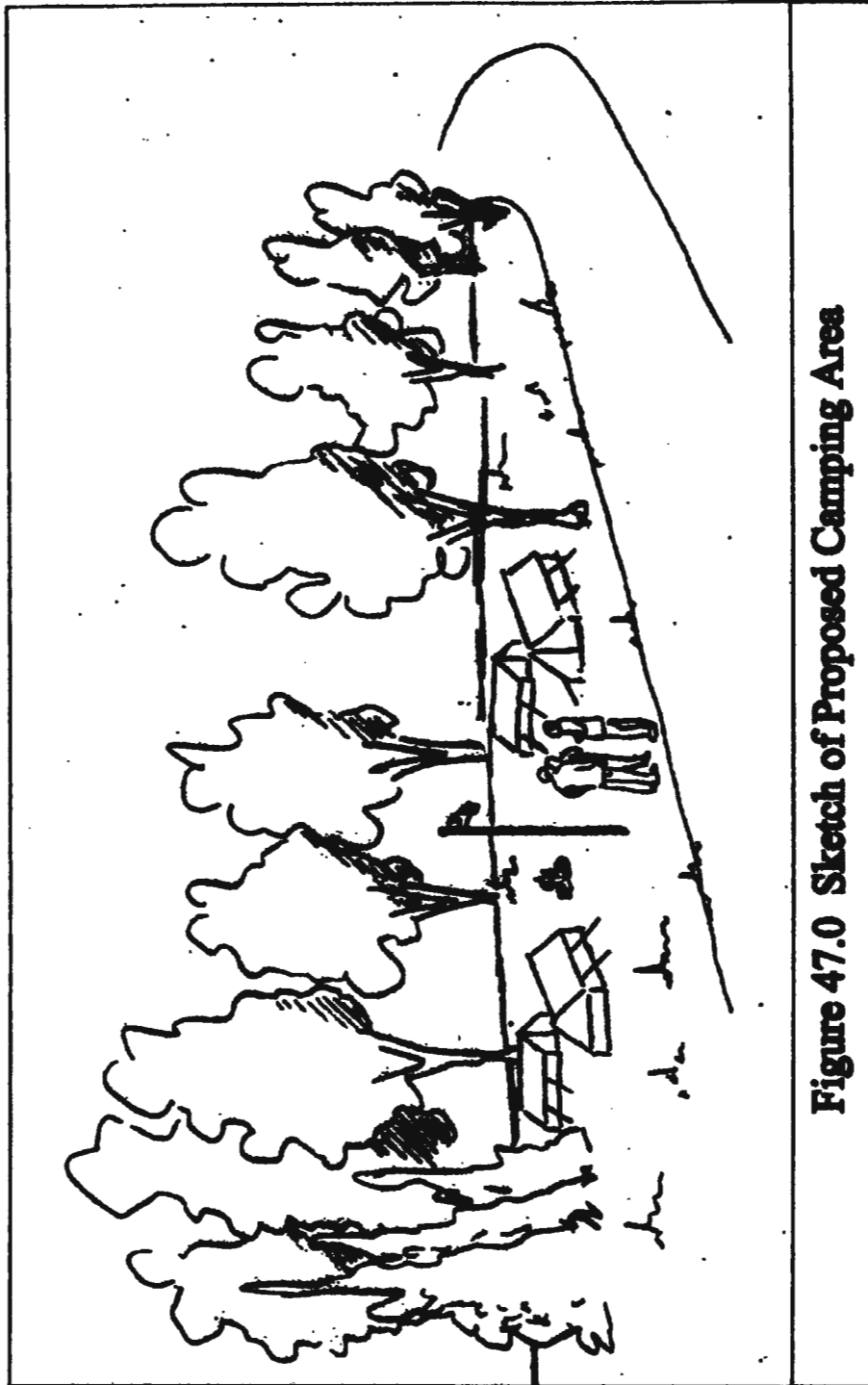


**Figure 44.0 Sketch of Proposed Senior Center Outdoor Improvements**





**Figure 46.0 Plan of Proposed Camping Area Improvements**



**Figure 47.0 Sketch of Proposed Camping Area**



## **Conclusion**

This chapter describes a scenario for a new beginning for the Monastery. Under this plan, the Monastery will be a Community Resource Complex that not only serves its residents, but visitors as well. It will be utilized by multiple generations of residents, provide: a more central, updated Town Hall; a necessary preschool educational facility; enhanced recreational opportunities; and establish a 'Town Center' – alive with activity and opportunity.

More importantly, this redevelopment plan ensures the preservation of the Monastery's historical, cultural, and open space value to the Town while promoting in-fill development and reuse of vacant structures. Efficient in-fill development helps to preserve undeveloped land elsewhere in the Town. With respect to the existing Pigeon-gray granite facades of the Monastery, design regulations that continue and repeat this aesthetic value could help return this site to its 19<sup>th</sup> Century glory.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Implementation**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter addresses implementation of the redevelopment plan presented in chapter five. It estimates the costs involved with the improvements to the land in the study area. It addresses the fiscal impacts to the Town with respect to services the Town must provide. It discusses sources of funding that could be used for the acquisition of open space. Finally, actions that the Town might take to ensure the implementation of this plan are considered.

The presented figures give a rough estimate of some of the costs associated with implementation of the plan. A more detailed plan would be needed to precisely estimate the costs of implementation.

Fortunately, the site is currently owned by the Town, thus, site acquisition is not an issue for this redevelopment plan – as is often the first hurdle of any redevelopment plan.

#### **On- and Off-Site Improvements**

This estimate is based on improving the study area to the point where three vacant structures can be rehabilitated for a preschool educational facility, a new Town Hall location, and an information center. It includes costs for the alteration of required utilities to the existing structures. No demolition or new road construction costs are necessary, as this plan calls for the reuse of existing infrastructure. Table 6.0 lists the estimated costs associated with on- and off-site improvements.

<b>Table 6.0 Site Improvement Costs</b>	
<b>On- and Off-site Improvements:</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Utility Alteration/ Expansion	\$100,000
Soft Costs (20%)	\$20,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$120,000</b>

*Source: Maguire Group*

There are existing water, gas, electric, telephone, and sanitary sewer services at the Monastery. To alter/ expand these utilities to the rehabilitated structures might cost approximately \$100,000. When soft costs for professional services such as surveying, delineating wetlands, and permitting are figured in, the cost for the improvement of the land in the study area is estimated at \$120,000.

## **Rehabilitated Structures**

### *Preschool Educational Facility*

Estimating the costs of rehabilitating the existing utility building is a difficult task. Factors involved with this estimate include: number of desired classrooms, number of offices, indoor recreation space, fire alarm systems, etc. More likely than not, the building should be gutted, and new construction can begin utilizing the building's shell.

### *Town Hall*

This rehabilitation project is the most involved and most costly of the proposed improvements. The vacant, former public library site would need to be reconfigured into small offices, as most of the existing spaces are large, open areas. This plan also calls for the restoration of the original second floor of the Cistercian Monastery's Church and Guest Quarters. This restoration should mimick the former building's facade as closely

percent of land in Cumberland remains undeveloped. The Town should map out vacant, undeveloped land and create a prioritized program for acquiring parcels adjacent to or near protected open space. This plan should also include smaller lots that can serve as linkages to larger parcels, encouraging connectivity.

### *Stewardship/ Management Plan for Public and Privately-Owned Open Space*

This section describes suggestions for a stewardship/ management plan for both public and privately-owned open space within the Town. Several plans present themselves as options to cost-free stewardship and management of open space areas.

Utilizing the Senior Center programming was suggested for the creation of an information center in the previous section. A suggestion to utilize this program is also appropriate for a stewardship and management plan. The Senior population is generally a forgotten asset in most communities. However, they can provide skills and services such as gardening, light maintenance, and organizational skills that can contribute to an overall effort/ goal. Given the Senior Center's location on the grounds of the Monastery, proximity could not be easier.

Another option would be to utilize the various groups, clubs, and organizations within the Town that use the open space areas the Town is seeking to maintain. The following table lists these organizations that should be incorporated into participation in a stewardship/ management plan:

**Table 7.0 Groups, Clubs, Organizations In Cumberland**

<i>Recreational Resource Organizations</i> Abbott Run Valley Club Arnold Mills Community House Garden Club Ashton Homemakers Club BF Norton Family Center Blackstone Valley Historical Society Blackstone Valley Tourism Council Boys and Girls Club of Cumberland/ Lincoln Camp Ker-Anna
<i>Cumberland Sports Clubs</i> Cumberland Colts Football Cumberland Kids Wrestling Club Cumberland Jr. Select Hockey Cumberland Youth Baseball Cumberland Youth Soccer Association Northern Rhode Island Lacrosse Association CYO Competitive Basketball Northern Rhode Island State Games Cumberland Figure Skating Club Dan James Memorial Softball League Over 35 Men's Softball High School pool
<i>Scout Troops</i> Cub Scouts Pack 10 Arnold Mills Pack 1 Diamond Hill Pack 2 Cumberland Hill
Boy Scouts Troop 3 Cumberland Troop 6 Cumberland Troop 11 Cumberland Troop 12 Berkeley/ Ashton
Girl Scouts Ashton School Community School Cumberland Hill Mercymount

Source: [www.cumberlandri.org](http://www.cumberlandri.org)



## **Enhanced and Expanded Recreation Areas**

### ***Proposed Senior Center Outdoor Improvements***

The Senior Center currently has several outdoor activity areas such as a shuffleboard court, picnic area, and pergola with gardens. This section describes several additional activities that will enhance this area - for Seniors and the general public.

This plan proposes the installation of fifteen upright, galvanized grills scattered throughout the picnic area. including cooking elements with existing amenities will give people the option of spending the day at the Monastery. It can also promote group functions such as annual picnics and outings.

In addition, this plan also proposes the installation of several bocce courts and horseshoe pits constructed of pressure-treated lumber and compacted blue stone dust. There is ample space at this location to support both activities, and installation know-how is minimal.

Table 8.0 details the estimated costs involved with the proposed improvements. Installation and construction of these recreational elements could be completed by the Parks Department staff, and materials cost in minimal.

<b>Table 8.0 Senior Center Outdoor Improvement Costs</b>				
Item	Unit	Cost/Unit	Quantity	Cost
1"x4"x8' Pressure-Treated Lumber	l.f.	\$15.00	19	\$285.00
Blue Stone Dust	s.y.	\$40.00	7	\$280.00
Regulation Bocce Set	each	\$120.00	2	\$240.00
Regulation Horseshoe Set	each	\$80.00	2	\$160.00
Single Galvanized Grill	each	\$149.00	15	\$2,235.00
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$3,200.00</b>

*Source: Patterson-Williams Athletic Manufacturing Co.*

### *Proposed Athletic Fields*

Adjacent to the Mary Carpentier Memorial Garden and Maintenance Garage is a large maintained grass area. This section describes the installation of a baseball and softball field opposite each other and sharing the outfield space between the two. Equipment necessary includes two galvanized perpendicular arch backstops, several aluminum bleachers, clay and regulation bases for the infields. The area is an existing, gently sloping site that requires no clearing of trees or grading. This improvement would provide additional active recreational areas to the site.

Table 9.0 details the estimated costs involved with the proposed improvements. Installation and construction of these elements could again be completed by the Parks Department staff. Lighting should be considered but is not required – in the case of any evening games.

<b>Table 9.0 Proposed Athletic Fields Improvement Costs</b>				
Item	Unit	Cost/Unit	Quantity	Cost
Galvanized Perpendicular Arch Backstop	each	\$3,690.00	2	\$7,380.00
4-Row Aluminum Bleachers	each	\$975.00	4	\$3,900.00
Clay	s.y.	\$55.00	60	\$3,300.00
Regulation Base Set	each	\$140.00	2	\$280.00
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$14,860.00</b>

*Source; Patterson-Williams Athletic Manufacturing Co.*

### *Proposed Camping Area*

Just beyond the maintenance garage is an abandoned paved road that leads into the woodland area of the site. This road eventually becomes a dirt road once past the small pond. This road continues into several open field areas.

This plan proposes these fields become seasonal camping areas for Scout Troops within the community. Back in the 1970's, these fields were utilized for Scout camping on weekends, and regional Jamborees. This plan proposes to bring back camping to these open fields with no additional improvements costs to the Town.

### **Cumberland's Role in Implementation**

The Town can play an important role in ensuring that the Monastery is redeveloped in a manner that is not only appropriate for the site, but that also maximizes benefits to the residents of the Town. The best way to accomplish this is to initiate public participation in creating a vision plan for the Monastery and the Town, using this redevelopment plan to establish a foundation. Community resources such as various groups, clubs, organizations, and populations such as Seniors, are generally underutilized. If given a chance to participate in the planning process, management, and use of the Town's recreational resources, a sense of pride and ownership would not only drive projects forward, it would give the residents a 'sense of place' within their community.

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